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63rd year of publication

## Founder of Calvinism praised as visionary at anniversary launch

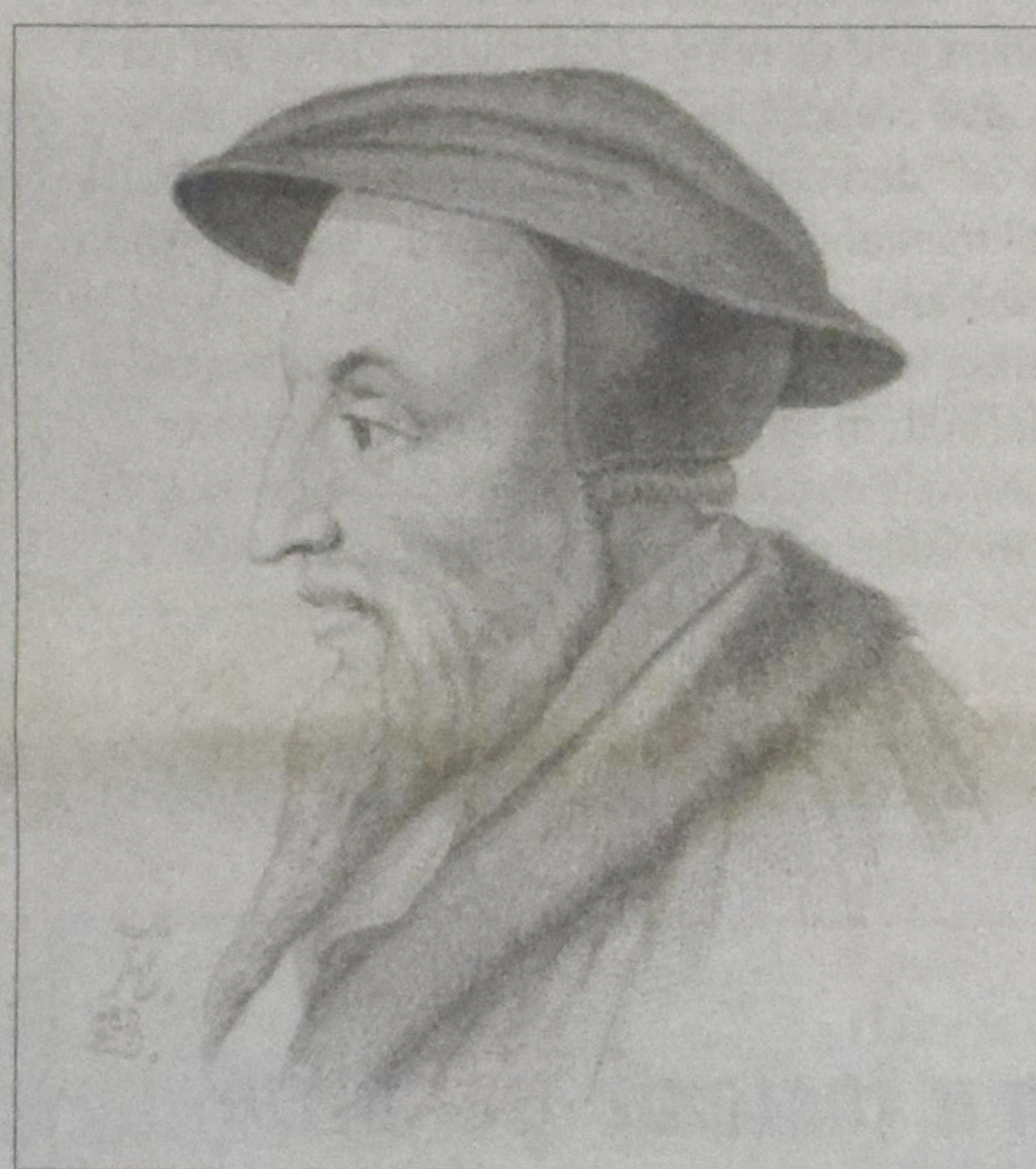
## Stephen Brown

Geneva, (ENI) – Jean Calvin, known for his role in the Protestant Reformation that centered around Geneva during the 16th century, has been praised as one of this story's most astute theologians. The remarks were made at a ceremony to launch a year of events to mark the 500th anniversary of his birth.

"His work provided the Reformation movement with a first systematisation of its thought, which strengthened the movement and helped the churches to organize themselves," said the Rev. Thomas Wipf, president of the Federation of Swiss Protestant Churches' council. He was speaking during a November 2 ceremony in Geneva at the city's Reformation Wall, a monument to honor Calvin and other Protestant reformers.

Noyon in France and made his main impact in Geneva has begun a movement which has reached far and wide," said Nyomi, in a recorded message from China, where he and Kirkpatrick are visiting churches.

Kirkpatrick said that Calvin had offered, "A vision of the sovereignty of God over all the world, which calls all of us to work for a world filled with



justice, compassion and peace."

## An honest account

The Protestant reformer, often known in the anglophone world as John Calvin, was born on 10 July 1509 in northern France. He died on 27 May 1564 in Geneva, and was buried the following day, without pomp, and at his wish no gravestone was placed above his burial site.

Speaking at a media conference that followed the inauguration of the calvin09 year, Kristin Rossier, a member of the council of the Swiss Protestant federation, said the anniversary year would not ignore Calvin's mistakes.

"Our intention is not to make

Calvin a hero or a saint," said Rossier. "His errors and the grey areas of his thought and person will also be discussed, such as the rigor of the discipline he imposed, and the lack of tolerance he showed towards his opponents."

The calvin09 year will include events such as conferences, theatre productions, exhibitions and concerts. An exhibition at Geneva's International Museum of the Reformation will use modern digital technology to portray a day in the Reformer's life, while a number of special books have been produced to mark the anniversary.

For details of the anniversary year visit: [www.calvin09.org](http://www.calvin09.org)

## International impact

Calvin democratized the ministry of the church, said Wipf, "breaking the monopoly of power of the bishop and the priest." He put God above all authority, and reinforced bridges between humanist thought and Christian convictions.

The year of events, called "calvin09", to mark Calvin's birth in 1509 is organized by the Swiss Protestant federation, the Protestant Church of Geneva, and the Geneva-based World Alliance of Reformed Churches.

In video messages to the launch of calvin09, WARC's Ghanaian general secretary, the Rev. Setri Nyomi, and president, the Rev. Clifton Kirkpatrick, a U.S. Presbyterian, noted the international impact of Calvin's message, and the reformer's commitment to social justice.

"The legacy of Jean Calvin, the visionary pioneer in the Reformed movement who originated from

San Francisco – The Institute for Jewish & Community Research (IJCR) announced the release of *The Trouble with Textbooks: Distorting History and Religion* by Dr. Gary Tobin and Dennis Ybarra.

The five-year study of 28 history, geography, and social studies textbooks, published by Lexington Books, reveals that the most widely used textbooks in America's schools are presenting a distorted view of Christianity, Judaism, Islam, and the Middle East. *The Trouble with Textbooks* shows that textbooks are filled with errors, inaccuracies, and even propaganda.

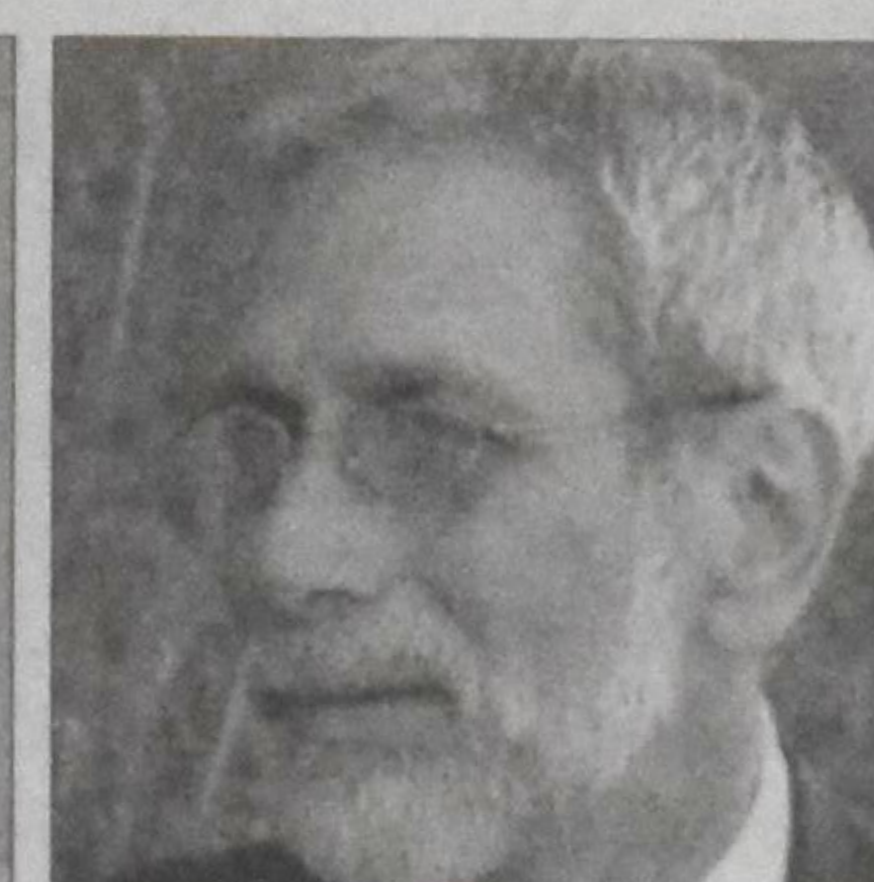
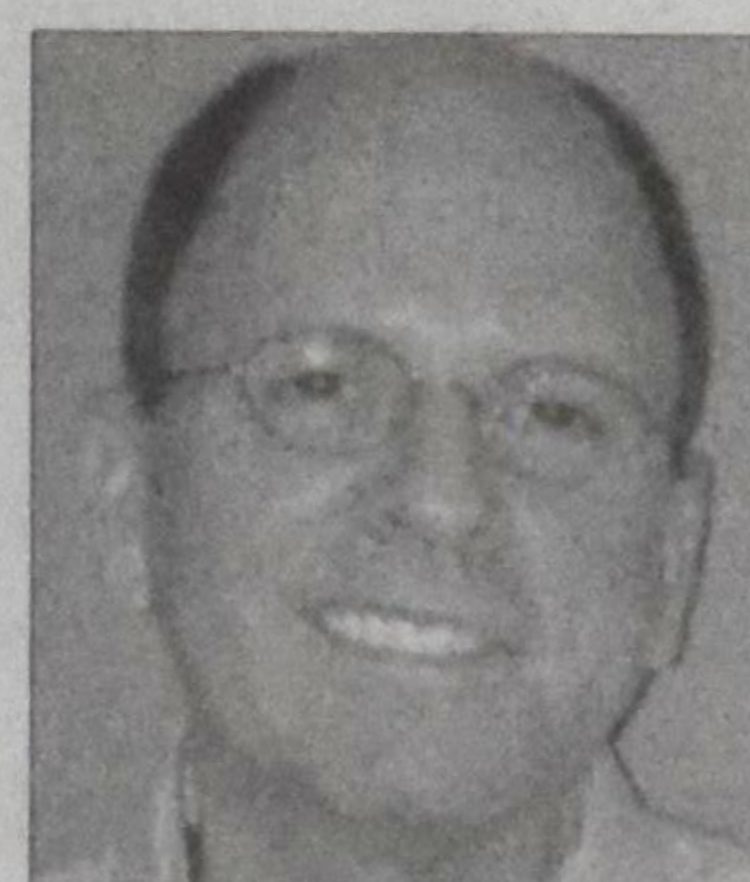
It is shocking to find the kind of misinformation we discovered in American textbooks and supplemental materials being used by schools in every state in the country," said co-author Dr. Gary Tobin, president of the Institute for Jewish & Community Research. "Elected officials at every level should investigate how these

offensive passages are creeping into our textbooks. Presenting false information in the classroom undermines the very foundation of the American educational system."

## Too many mistakes

The authors found over 500 erroneous passages in the textbooks. One textbook charges that early Jewish civilization contributed little to the arts and sciences. "Excepting the Old Testament's poetry, the Jews produced very little of note in any of the art forms.... There is no record of any important [early] Jewish contributions to the sciences." (*World Civilizations*, Thomson Wadsworth)

Other misrepresentations are even more outrageous, including the denial of the Jewish roots of Jesus. As one textbook says, "Christianity



Dennis Ybarra and Dr. Gary Tobin

was started by a young Palestinian named Jesus" (*The World*, Pearson/Scott Foresman). The book denies Jesus' Jewish roots and ignores the historical fact that there were no Palestinians in the time of Jesus. There is no book that so much as mentions the existence of a Palestinian people or a Palestinian culture at that time. The Bible makes no mention of them. It was Roman Emperor Hadrian (A.D/117-138) who changed the name of the age-old biblical land into Palestine, naming it after the Philistines, the archenemy of the

Israelites, thereby wiping out forever the Jewish connection to the Promised Land.

## Parents warned

The textbooks tend to be critical of Jews and Israel, disrespectful about Christianity, and rather than represent Islam in an objective way, tends to glorify it," said co-author Dennis Ybarra. "To teach children, for instance, that Jesus was a Palestinian and deemphasize his Jewishness does a disservice to Christians and Jews as well as anyone who cares about historical accuracy."

The authors strongly recommend that parents, educators, and elected officials pay much closer attention to what is being presented in social studies textbooks. Parents in particular are encouraged to demand accountability on this issue from legislators, textbook authors and publishers, and school administrators.



## News/Commentary

# Proud to be American again

Brett Alan Dewing

As a citizen of the United States, I recently voted in what has been, and forever will be, heralded as an historic election. On November 4th, a record number of voters cast ballots either for Barack Obama, now set to be the first African-American president, or John McCain, whose running mate, Sarah Palin, would have been the first woman to hold the post of VP.

Living in the U.S., I have not been allowed to forget the import of this event for even a minute. For the past three to four months, I have been bombarded with prerecorded messages and energetic campaign volunteers calling at least once a day to inform me of my ever-more-exciting, ever-more-historic civic duty. With all of the constant attention, it has been far too easy to become weary and cynical about the whole endeavour.

But now that it's over, now that history has officially been "made", I confess to a thrill with which I have hitherto been unfamiliar: the thrill of being an American.

I have never been patriotic, and ever since attending university in Hamilton, I have considered myself an expatriate Canadian. The inevitable mudslinging of an election year did not improve my joie de payee any, but looking back on the events of the past week, I find myself beginning to change my tune a bit.

## A return to basic values

It is not the choice of Barack Obama, or even the precedent set by that decision, that has altered my view. In fact, going into the polls on Tuesday, I found myself pleasantly content with either candidate instead of silently dreading them both as is my usual attitude. No, it was upon

hearing the two exceptional speeches given by McCain and Obama that night, when one was clearly the victor and the other not, that I began to realize that a subtle sea change had been brewing beneath the storm of election mania.

The buzzwords of this year have been "hope" and "change". And while there have been plenty of less-than-generous-minded advertisements on both sides, the true issues at play have indeed been some Phillipians 4:8 adjectives. For once, Americans have stood up and woken up to face some of the truths around them and their place in the world. Finally, instead of justifying our arrogance, we are looking for ways to improve our international image. Finally, instead of celebrating our greed, we are seeking avenues to stem our consumerism. Finally, instead of snapping at our tails, we are trying to come together as a people.

When people are now asked what our country needs most, they reply with suggestions that we earn the respect of our neighbours and develop clean fuels. These are far more constructive complaints than the recent rants about the "war over oil" and our feverish furthering of the "white man's burden" mentality that has led us into the ends of the earth with a tank and a Big Mac.

After listening to McCain and Obama's speeches on Tuesday night (both of which are available to watch or read at CNN.com), I realized that positive change has been the true message at the good hearts of these two good men. They addressed the missteps of our past not with reactionist alarm, but with realistic optimism for a balanced future. Both urged Americans of all political stripes to come together in order to support and guide our president-elect.

## Partisan fault lines

You see, for all the talk that America has proved itself to be colour blind, the real distinction here has not been black and white, but red and blue. One of the cardinal fault lines in American life has been the increasing bile spat between Democrats and Republicans. A blindly loyal conservative/liberal split has done no one any favours. It's precisely for that reason that I have declined to register with either party. Adherents to one of the two parties are instantly earmarked with wide-sweeping political views and a very prescribed set of morals. "Democrat" and "Republican" have become heavily loaded and mutually exclusive terms. We have been a house viciously divided when we all claim to be pulling for our democratic republic.

The following excerpt from Barack Obama's speech eloquently describes the journey my country must now attempt to take if we are to achieve a better tomorrow.

"I will always be honest with you about the challenges we face. I will listen to you, especially when we disagree. And above all, I will ask you join in the work of remaking this nation the only way it's been done in America for 221 years – block by block, brick by brick, calloused hand by calloused hand.

"What began 21 months ago in the depths of winter must not end on this autumn night. This victory alone is not the change we seek – it is only the chance for us to make that change. And that cannot happen if we go back to the way things were. It cannot happen without you.

"So let us summon a new spirit of patriotism; of service and responsibility where each of us resolves to pitch in and work harder and look after not only ourselves, but each other. Let us remember that if this financial crisis taught us anything, it's that we cannot have a thriving Wall Street while Main Street suffers – in this country, we rise or fall as one nation; as one people.

"Let us resist the temptation to fall back on the same partisanship and pettiness and immaturity that has poisoned our politics for so long."

## Trusting in God

I was immensely relieved to hear the candidates address this schism in their election night speeches. I was also proud to see that we have found ourselves with an orator for a leader, as so much of the abuse our current president has taken has been based on his lack of public speaking prowess. I can only pray that Obama proves to be a man who uses that power for positive change.

While we have yet to see if we have gotten ourselves a Saul or a David, Americans need more than ever to believe that we have elected the leader chosen for us. God has promised us that our leaders are his anointed, whether they save or enslave. It is hard to reconcile that fact with our reality sometimes, but we should trust God to give us the leaders we need and the governments we deserve. Regardless of who we voted for, each and every citizen of the United States should now stand behind president-elect Obama as he prepares to undertake truly the hardest and most thankless job in the world.

And that is why, in the early hours of November 5th, I lay awake in my bed grinning with excitement that had nothing to do with either candidate and all to do with an America that may at last be ready to lay their red and blue swords down to be beaten into anything with the word "share" in the title.

Brett Dewing (brettalandewing@gmail.com)  
is assistant manager at a retail media store.  
He lives in Warren center, Pennsylvania.

# Chocolates mark 500 years of Calvin in a taste of 'paradise'

Stephen Brown

GENEVA (ENI) – Swiss chocolatier Blaise Poyet believes he has captured the essence of the Protestant reformer Jean Calvin in special chocolate pralines he created to mark the 500th anniversary of the religious figure who made his mark on European history.

"It's not easy to represent theological ideas by using the taste buds," acknowledges Poyet, a master chocolatier from Maison Poyet in Vevey, 80 kilometres (50 miles) from Geneva, where the French-born reformer lived and worked. "But the key thing for Calvin is the glory of God, his excellence, his perfection. So we chose a chocolate that we chocolatiers find exceptional, rare and flawless."

The chocolates were unveiled in Geneva on November 2 after a ceremony to launch a year called "calvin09" to mark the 500th anniversary in 2009 of Calvin's birth, along with other products and events intended to capture the life and spirit of Calvin.

## A real challenge

The Federation of Swiss Protestant Churches approached Maison Poyet to produce the chocolates.

"It was an interesting challenge," says Poyet, whose 15-year-old company has 27 employees and makes six tons of chocolates a year. "For me, Calvin was just one of the reformers that I heard about at school, a long time ago."

It took weeks of discussion and research to figure out how to represent through flavors the person and work of Calvin. "Our creations are not just chocolates with a logo," notes Poyet. "We take our research seriously."

As Calvin lived and worked in Geneva, which is now

part of Switzerland, the chocolates are based on local ingredients that were used at the time of the reformer and are still to be found today.

## Theological recipe

The first layer is based on a classic smooth and runny praline mix. "But we have 'reformed' it," says the Vevey chocolatier, by using crunchy caramelized hazelnuts, and using salt from the Swiss Alps to make the praline slightly savory.

The second layer uses a "chocolate Grand Cru from Bolivia," made from 68 percent cocoa paste, to represent Calvin's theology of the glory and perfection of God.

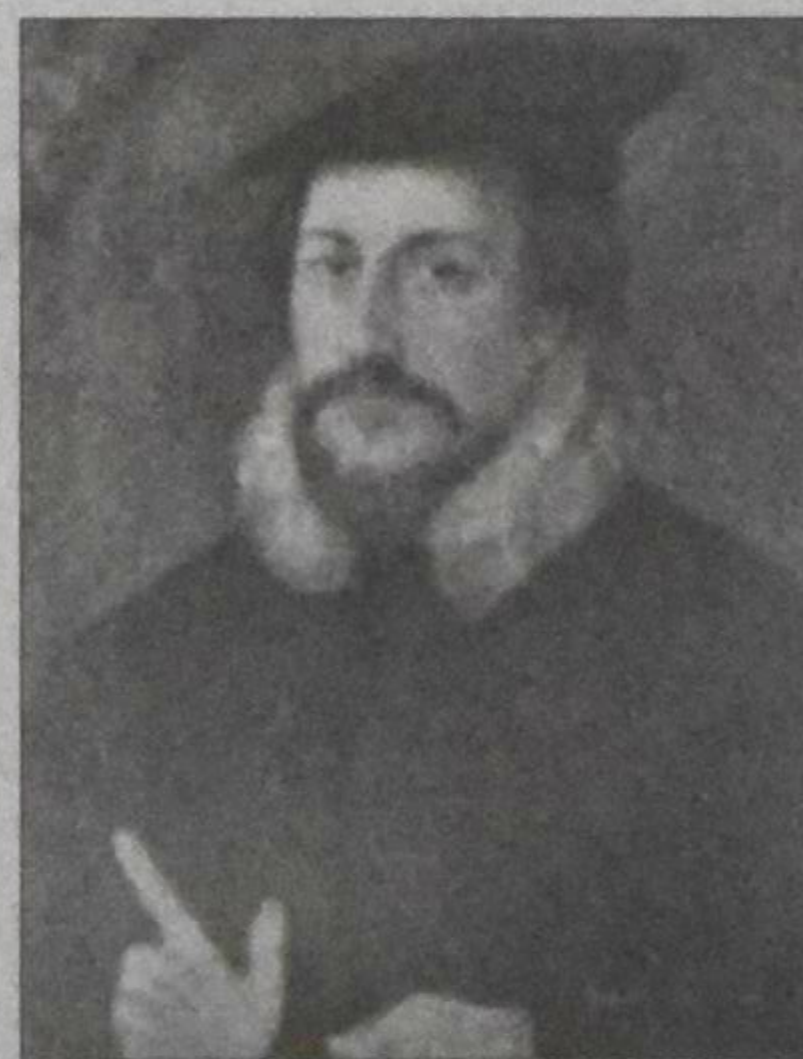
"It is a real pleasure," Poyet says of the Bolivian chocolate. "Paradise indeed."

Some historians have noted Calvin was not always an easy person, yet "it is undeniable that in his actions, he demonstrated exceptional tenderness," recounts Poyet. "So we have used a caramel made from Swiss cream that that slightly softens the chocolate to represent in a discreet way this love for one's neighbor."

Finally, a taste of lemon verbena, a perennial, represents Calvin's ability to sow, to plant and to make things grow.

Link to purchase the chocolates online:  
[www.calvin09.org/index.php?lang=2&idcatside=534](http://www.calvin09.org/index.php?lang=2&idcatside=534)

Editor: CC Suggests the following marketing slogan:  
Yummy, yummy; Calvin in your tummy.





## Musings

## What if ...?

Excerpted from a newsletter of the Northumberland Chapter of the Council of Canadians

The results of the latest Canadian election have left some people wondering about the outcome: What if Canada had used proportional representation where every vote counts? Gone are the days of the two-party system and the first-past-the-post winner takes all. The Prime Minister can be elected with a bit over 30 percent of the popular vote while 60+ percent rejects him/her.

Had the votes in the recent election been cast under a fair and proportional voting system, the seat allocation would have been approximately as follows:

Conservatives – 117 seats (not 143)

Liberals – 81 seats (not 76)

NDP – 57 seats (not 37)

Bloc – 28 seats (not 50)

Greens – 23 seats (not 0)

During this election, only 59.1 percent – or 13.8 million out of 23.4 million – of eligible voters actually voted, a historic low in Canada. While voting is a right that should be exercised, perhaps more people would vote if they felt their vote were better reflected in the outcome of the election through proportional representation.

Prime Minister Harper, who claims a new “enhanced” mandate, actually received 168,737 fewer votes than last time but garnered an additional 19 seats, which means the Conservatives will govern the country with the support of fewer than 23 percent of the eligible voters.

The NDP attracted 1.1 million more votes than the Bloc, but the voting system gave the Bloc 50 seats, the NDP 37. 940,000 voters supporting the Green Party sent no one to Parliament. By comparison, 813,000 Conservative voters in Alberta were able to elect 27 MPs. How fair is that?

## Style invitational

The Washington Post’s “Style Invitational” once again asked readers to take any word from the dictionary, alter it by adding, subtracting, or changing one letter, and supplying a new definition.

Here are last year’s winners:

**Bozone (n.):** The substance surrounding stupid people that stops bright ideas from penetrating. The bozone layer, unfortunately, shows little sign of breaking down in the near future.

**Cashtration (n.):** The act of buying a house, which renders the subject financially impotent for an indefinite period.

**Sarchasm (n):** The gulf between the author of sarcastic wit and the person who doesn’t get it.

**Inoculate (v):** To take coffee intravenously when you are running late.

**Osteopornosis (n):** A degenerate disease. (This one got extra credit.)

**Karmageddon (n):** It’s like, when everybody is sending off all these really bad vibes, right? And then, like, the Earth explodes and it’s like, a serious bummer.

**Decafalon (n.):** The grueling event of getting through the day consuming only things that are good for you.

**Glibido (v):** All talk and no action.

**Dopeler effect (n):** The tendency of stupid ideas to seem smarter when they come very quickly.

**Arachnoleptic fit (n.):** The frantic dance performed just after you’ve accidentally walked through a spider web.

**Beelzebug (n.):** Satan in the form of a mosquito that gets into your bedroom at three in the morning and cannot be cast out.

**Caterpallor (n.):** The color you turn after finding half a grub in the fruit you’re eating.

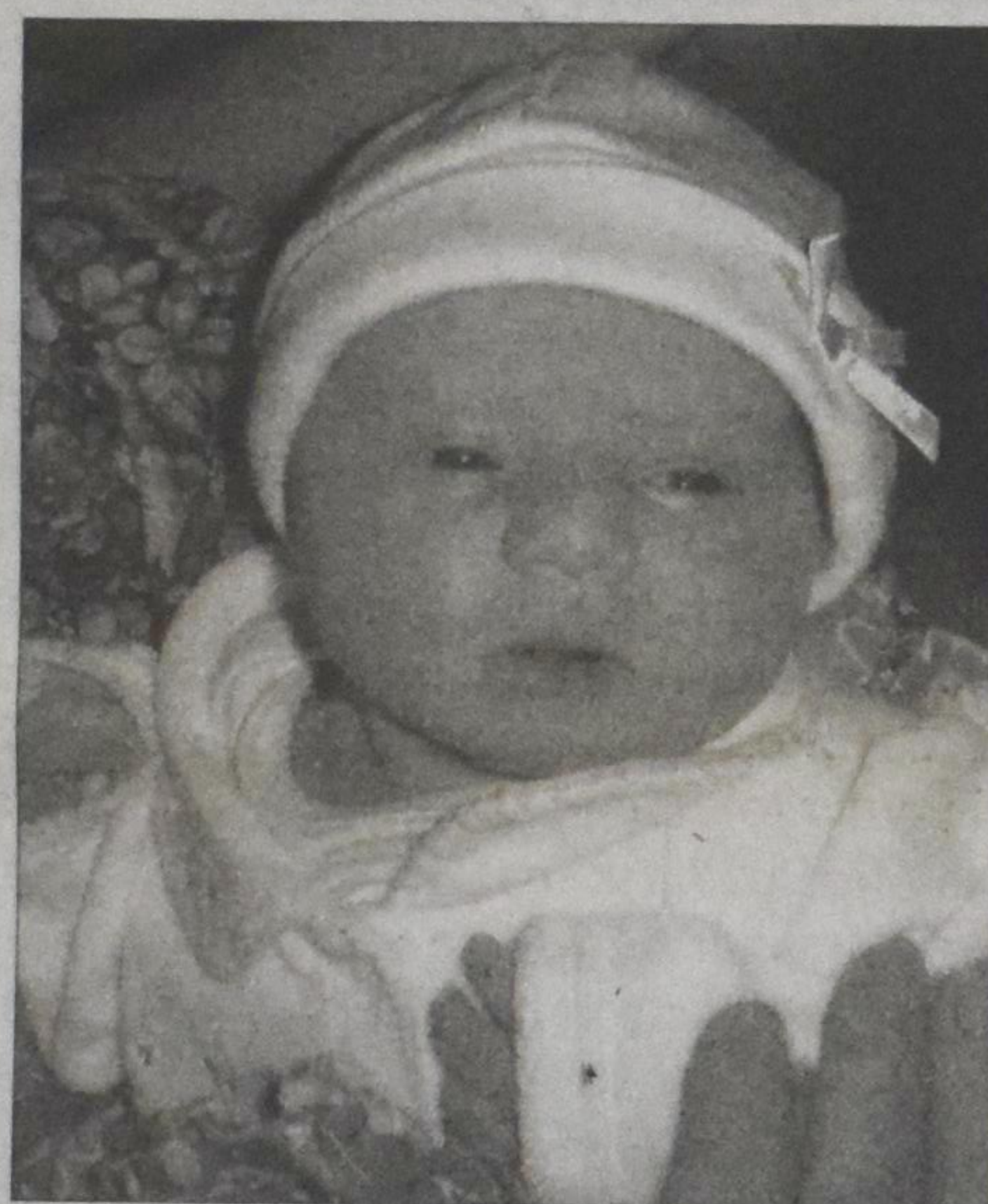
## Boys will be ... busy at home

“The most depressing four words in all educational circles these days are ‘boys will be boys.’ It’s a posture of resignation. What we’re saying when we say ‘boys will be boys’ is boys will be violent, rapacious animals.”

So says Michael Kimmel, author of the recent somewhat hyped *Guyland: The Perilous World Where Boys Become Men*. The basic argument of the book is that a new stage of development (or non-development) has found its way into the human life-span: *emerging adulthood*. Unfortunately, for many males this period between 16 and 26 is little more than a wasteland of binge drinking and sexual promiscuity. It is a buddy culture characterized by the worst of the men’s locker room. Responsibilities like marriage, parenthood, career, and home ownership are not even in sight.

Our campuses across the nation are rife with these energetic, uncommitted and, at times, unruly young men. They may not realize it, but as Kimmel says, freedom cuts both ways. Having no road map can be both terrifying and lonely.

Six short years ago I was still in a version of *Guyland*



(although I would not have been a very good example of the dramatically debauched and lecherous components of this sociological portrait). I was certainly a part of the general demographic. Now my life has radically changed. This past Sunday we baptized our second child,

Petra Jean. Born on September 13th, the exact same birthday as our two-year-old son, she is named after my mother, Petronella, and my mother-in-law, Jean. Needless to say, my life is not my own, if it ever was.

## Gender bending

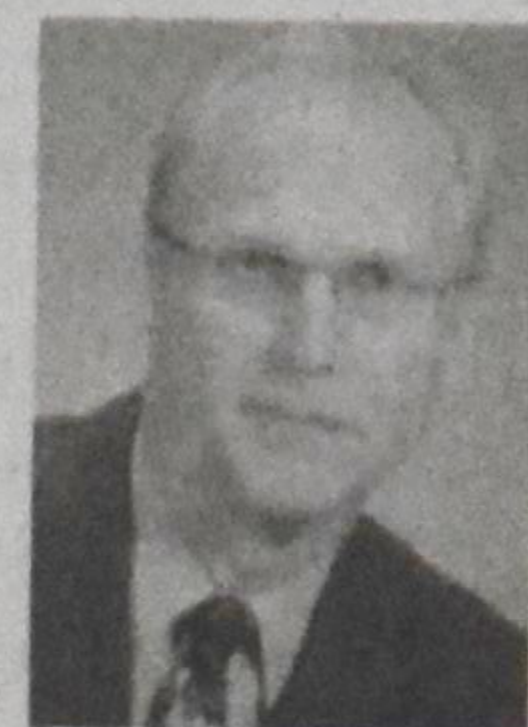
I wouldn’t call myself a feminist, but my life has certainly not taken on the fabled 1950’s *Leave it to Beaver* traditional roles for husband and wife. In fact, my life is shaping up to be radically different from that of my parents and grandparents.

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## Eternal Student

Peter Schuurman



First of all, I married a professional woman. She is a family physician (in fact, 60 per cent of her graduating class was female) – and it’s a job that comes with its fair share of responsibility and stress. It also comes with an income that is significantly more substantial than my own, making her in effect more the bread winner.

I am not the only one. Not a small number of my friends are in similar configurations. In fact, I know a number of cases where the husband has taken on the lion’s share of food preparation or child care. I even have a friend who showed up at the daytime women’s “Coffee Break” at his local church, breaking through not a few social conventions. Now I know that in many cases the woman still does much of the domestic chores (it’s true at our house). Still, a significant unprecedented social experiment is unfolding.

## Home-making man

Over the last year I took primary responsibility to care for my son 1.5 days a week. When I wasn’t on campus ministry tour, I would be working from the home – not always emotionally present, but more often than not available, if only for lunch together. I now take my son to swimming lessons on Monday mornings. A paternity leave is also in the works for the spring when my wife goes back to the clinic, which means for her three days a week away from home.

For me, it would be ideal if I could continue to do part-time work and be a significant part of the early years of my children. Wages can imprison you as well as free you. G. K. Chesterton once said “the real habitation of Liberty is in the home.” Home is where you can walk around in your bath robe all day, whip up pancakes and sausage, and build forts in the basement using sofa cushions. Don’t try that in your workplace. Only home can mean fresh air, neighbourhood barbeques and summer vegetable gardens.

I don’t want to exaggerate the general trend; my swimming class is still 90 per cent mom and tots. But as I chant “The Motor Boat Song” with my son in the public pool I realize I am thousands of kilometers away from *Guyland*. Sure, part of me is wild at heart and still thirsts for the days of Algonquin Park canoe camping. Another, more mellow part of me enjoys tumbling together with my son on the carpet, jogging with the stroller to the park, and shouting excitedly with the first poops of potty training.

Peter Schuurman is the Christian Reformed Education Mission Leader and resides in Guelph, Ontario.



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## Editorial

# Personal reflections on the ascent of Barak Obama

Bert Witvoet

November 4, 2008, was one of those days I will remember for a long time. It sounds like a cliché to call it a historic day, but that is what it was. It was the day that African Americans saw one of their own become the president-elect of the United States. It was the day that youth who previously felt indifferent or uninvolved in the political process dropped their cynicism and came out to vote. The outcome of the election felt like a religious experience for many, and I do believe that it was just that – a huge religious experience that penetrated the very hearts of many Americans and non-Americans alike.

Personally, I had tears in my eyes when I saw African Americans cry and rejoice, and when I saw Barack Obama address 200,000 people gathered in Grand Park, Chicago, around midnight. Apart from what anyone may think of the future under the Democrats, the air was filled with relief, hope, and exuberance. A lot of it had to do with the fact that the disastrous regime of George W. Bush and Dick Cheney had finally come to an end. Anyone who has read books or articles about what these ideologues have done to the economy, international relations, and personal and business ethics in the name of democracy and freedom will agree that this regime needed to be swept out of office.

## A breath of fresh air

But a lot of it also had to do with the person of Barack Obama, a man who has shown that he cares about the poor and that he is willing to walk a path that is a different path from those who confuse personal gain with national and international security. His seemingly superficial mantra was "Change" and "Yes, we can." But these words captured better than any other that something was rotten in the state of America. Barack embodied a thoughtful and caring approach that rejected personal gain and sought the welfare of others. He came across as a righteous man, a just man, one who would have been spoken of highly in the Psalms and Proverbs of Solomon. His speeches were poetic and wise. People started to believe him and even believe in him.

Although I recognize the danger of seeing Barack as a saviour, I want to first acknowledge the fact that the hunger for hope and renewal evident in so many Ameri-

cans and so many citizens all over the world is, first of all, a very human and laudable feeling. Human beings need hope; they need a sense of inclusion; they need a change from corruption and lies. The racism that has plagued America for centuries needs a cure. The inequality that has festered in the slums of America cries out for redemption. The reckless entry into an unjust war (Iraq) needs acknowledgement and repentance. The wasting of thousands of human lives in a cause driven by economic interests (think oil) needs cleansing. The excessive greed for profit and consumption needs addressing.

## A real hunger

That's why so many people were singing and dancing and crying. One young woman said, "Every time I hear Obama speak, I cry." What is that? Idolatry? Maybe. But maybe it's just a natural response to "a thing of beauty... full of sweet dreams, and health, and quiet dreaming." (John Keats) It's not every day that a politician can enthrall us with his poetic vision. I have a hunch that if Jesus had run against Obama, instead of John McCain, he, too, would have lost. He would not have been as charming and as attractive as this "son of Kenya." Just think of the passage in Isaiah 53: "He had no beauty nor majesty to attract us to him, nothing in his appearance that we should desire him.... He was despised and we held him in low esteem." Obama, on the other hand, attracts a lot of admirers, who hold him in high esteem. Is that bad? And let's face it, the hunger for redemption is so very human, even if the object of one's admiration is not able to provide it.

Why did I become emotional? I ask myself. I know the answer. Because I, too, hunger for justice and for reconciliation. Watching Jessie Jackson on television with tears in his eyes in Grand Park, as he listened to Barack Obama and heard him announced as the next President of the United States of America, made me realize the painful journey that African Americans have traveled for the past 400 years, as they started out as slaves, as possessions, without any rights. I could hear echoes of Martin Luther King's "Free at last! Free at last! Thank God Almighty, we're free at last!" I thrilled at the sight of hundreds of university students who had text-messaged each other to run to the White House and celebrate. They were eager to drive home the point that George W. Bush was on his way out, and that a new era had dawned.

I resonate with all of that. Let's acknowledge the universal cry for peace and justice.

## The prose of reality

Will Barack be able to meet the expectations of those who embrace him as the hope of the world? No way. As it has been said before, Politicians campaign in poetry, but they govern in prose. Now, there is nothing wrong with prose, but it tends to strip away the illusions of unrealistic expectations. Barack cannot solve the economic crisis that has come upon us as a result of collective greed and irresponsibility. He cannot make the world secure against radical militant Islam. He cannot fix the latent racism, homophobia, xenophobia and narrow nationalism that still linger in the entrails of American life. To be fair to him, he does not pretend that he can. His mantra is "Yes, we can."

Apart from the unrealistic expectations that people have (even in Kenya people are hoping that he can give them jobs!), Barack may well have the wrong prescriptions in mind when he faces these ills. Will he lean towards too great a dependence on the state? Will he

resort to a kind of pan-global illusion of security? Will he protect freedom of religion? We know that he is in favour of gay marriage and a woman's choice to have an abortion.

## Presumptuous warnings

Some critics, especially right-wing Christians who judge politicians and rulers by single moral issues like abortion and same-sex marriage, see in Barack traces of the Antichrist. Writes Michael O'Brien of LifeSiteNews.com, I doubt that he is the long-prophe-sied ruler of the world, but I also believe that he is a carrier of a deadly moral virus, indeed a kind of anti-apostle spreading of concepts and agendas that are not only anti-Christ but anti-human as well. In this sense he is of the spirit of Antichrist (perhaps without knowing it), and probably is one of several key figures in the world who (knowingly or unknowingly) will be instrumental in ushering in the time of great trial for the Church under its last and worst persecution, amidst the numerous other tribulations prophesied in the books of Daniel and Revelation, and letters of St Paul, St. John, and St. Peter."

Whoa! Hold on a minute. What's ye'all tryin to do, man? That's a lot of apocalyptic language applied to a mere mortal who has not really shown us yet what he intends to do. The way the Bible speaks of the Antichrist, he is the One who denies that Jesus is the Messiah. By that definition, this world is filled with Antichrists.

Are we going to judge that Obama is of the spirit of Antichrist based on his ability to inspire thousands of Americans with his brilliant speeches and convincing demeanour? Yes, he is very charismatic. Is that a sin? Kennedy was charismatic, too. From what I can tell, Obama is a devoted family man with a lot of integrity. He has a heart for the downtrodden. He tends to be pragmatic rather than driven by ideology. I hope that some of that will carry through in his approach to national and world issues. Yes, he's also a humanist who seeks strength from the goodness of people. Strange, though, that these critics of Obama do not see that waging an unjust war and destroying the environment also rank as a violation of moral standards. Why didn't they raise the spectre of the Antichrist with the Bush administration?

## A partial redemption

It's shortsighted to make abortion and same-sex marriage the litmus test of good government. Good government depends on so many different factors. And as for those who see Obama as a forerunner of world-government oppression, let's keep his desire for world peace in perspective. Right-wing Christians should avoid apocalyptic scenarios when it comes to seeking peace and goodwill. We cannot build good international relations if we act, guided by automatic distrust of others, on the basis of our own military strength. How do we implement the biblical instruction of not trusting in military might if we always seek peace at the end of a barrel?

Barack's "change" for America is not the conversion Americans need, but it can be part of it. The Kingdom of God does not exclude the positive qualities of a righteous and just human being. God can use Barack Obama for good. Let's cheer him on for whatever is good, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good report.

And, at the same time, let's keep in mind the words of the Apostle John: "Little children, keep yourselves from idols."

## Christian Courier

Founded in 1945

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## Letters

# Whither CC?

Since the passing of our editor, Harry der Nederlanden, people have asked us about the fate of the *Christian Courier*. They wonder if CC will be kept going. It's an understandable question, especially considering that the print media is having a tough time. Last month three publications came to an end: *The Christian Science Monitor*, *Frank* magazine, and *Masthead*. The *National Post* columnist Jonathan Kay cites two major reasons for this decline in readership of print media: the death of spare time and the death of community. People are too busy with other things to have the leisure to read papers, and they don't have an emotional investment in what used to be their parents' community.

The board has met several times in the past few months and has considered the question of our continuation as a print medium for people with a reformed worldview. It has asked for input from others. The general consensus has been that we should keep going. We don't want to give up on being a reformed community with all its expressions of cultural involvement, such as Christian schools, Reformed churches, Christian Labour Association, Christian Farmers, Christian political and social action, Christian Stewardship. Besides, so far, CC has been able to stay in the black, based on subscription income and ad revenue.

CC has been in existence since August 1945, when it started in Edmonton as stenciled sheets under the name *The Canadian Calvinist*. In 1951 it merged with *The Contact*, an Ontario-based paper since 1949, and was then known as

*Calvinist Contact*. It was renamed the *Christian Courier* in 1994. All these years, as it moved from a Dutch-language to an English-language family newspaper, it served a mainly Dutch-immigrant community. Being subscribed to by Dutch immigrants has mattered less and less over the years as Canadian-born subscribers joined the ranks. We think of ourselves as Canadians, with a Reformed perspective on life. Our vision is considered more important than our ethnic origin.

For the past few months, former editor Bert Witvoet has functioned as acting editor, and will continue to do so until the end of the year. By that time we hope to have a new editor in place. We have three applications, and are encouraged by the possibility of a new beginning. We hope that you, our faithful constituency, will spread the word that CC plans to be around for many more years. Please give us your input as to how we can best serve our readership and give vital testimony to the importance of humbly but boldly laying claim to the private circles and public squares of Canadian society in the name of our Lord.

If you feel strongly about that mission, give us a boost by sending a donation to Reformed Faith Witness, at 5 Joanna Dr., St. Catharines, Ont., L2N 1V1 (tax receiptable). Some time ago we received a \$5,000 donation for the continuation of *Christian Courier*. The donor will double that amount if supporters of CC will raise \$10,000.

Bert Witvoet

On behalf of the Board of Reformed Faith Witness

## Haunted by an important distinction

I am writing to thank you for two items in the October 27 issue and, if I may, to comment further on one of them.

First, I thought Rev. John Koole's response to the reviews of *The Shack* in a previous issue was spot on, both in terms of the book's much vaunted literary merit and its theodicy.

Second, thank you for Peter Schuurman's "Five or more ways to read the Bible." Schuurman refers to the "'inerrant Bible' versus the 'infallible Bible' and 'inspired Bible' debates of yesteryear." Without revisiting those debates, I have a comment on the conclusion of the article, which states that the Bible has a way of "haunting" us. "The haunting," we are told, "is not in the book so much as in the Holy Ghost that inspires the reading."

I agree entirely with what I take to be Schuurman's point. It is not the words on the page, but the blessing of the Holy Spirit which causes the message of the Bible to "haunt" us. However, at the risk of appearing to quibble with words, classic Reformed orthodoxy makes a distinction between the "inspiration" or God-breathed nature of Scripture, which makes it "infallible" (perhaps even "inerrant"), and the "illumination" of our minds by the Holy Spirit. To speak of the Holy Spirit "inspir(ing) the reading" is to use the language of neo-orthodoxy which teaches that it is not the Scriptures themselves that are inspired but our Spirit-directed experience of them. The distinction is an important one.

J. Cameron Fraser  
Lethbridge, Alberta

## Questions are necessary and human

I have not read *The Shack*, but I am troubled by the idea that, when we question "why bad things happen to good people," we are part and parcel of the "age of entitlement." (CC October 27, letter from Rev. John Koole) This is simply not so.

I am equally troubled by the idea that some of us may believe that "people who are dying of hunger in war-torn countries" as well as "our forefathers who buried at least half of their children born to them and often their young mothers as well," would accept that "no tragedy was beyond what we fallen creatures deserved." My hope is that anyone who feels overwhelmed by their sorrows in their lives will allow themselves to process this gut-wrenching pain in a way that helps them come to a place that is more healing than that we "deserve" this because we are fallen!

I will never forget the story of a young Tutsi man during the Rwanda genocide who was fleeing with his mother and sisters to the local church in hope of God's protection. He begged his mother to keep running, but she would not because she felt God would surely save them if they were

in his house. And so the young man took the matter into his own hands and ran out of the church with a fleeting last glance back to his mother and sisters as they were being violently slaughtered!

As far as our forefathers were concerned, when they lost half of their families ... I believe they just did not talk about their sorrow and their possible doubts in terms of their faith. That does not mean they did not have questions and doubts.

In short, I believe to question God in terms of human suffering and frailty, especially when we are encouraged to believe that God is all-loving and all-powerful, is simply human nature no matter where we live on the globe. But, more specifically, to allow ourselves to go through this painful process can often help us find and experience God differently. I believe, "seeking God when in deep personal pain is vastly different from hearing about God when life is good."

Arlene Van Hove,  
Surrey, B.C.

## Help us out on this one

My wife and I have read and re-read Prof. Bom's article: "Obama: America's new Democrat" (CC - October 27, 2008). Now I will readily admit that I did not graduate at the top of my class at Calvin in 1959, but I am generally able to understand a normally written article. However, when it comes to this one, I am going to ask you, could you please write an explanation for your CC readers?

Let me mention a few points to illustrate our request:

Is Prof. Bom saying that socialism is per se anti-Christian in nature? Is he, therefore, concluding that Mr. Obama cannot be a Christian, in spite of his claim to be one?

Is he saying that it would be a sad day if world hunger were eradicated?

Is he saying that what matters most in today's world, is the security of the USA, and the rest of the world can go to

hell in a handbasket?

Is he suggesting that there is no meaningful relationship between world hunger and possible security for rich Western nations?

From which specific Christian perspective does he make these conclusions?

Looking forward to your explanatory article in the near future.

John G. Klomps,  
Mississauga, Ontario

## Divisive article

Dr. Philip Bom's article about Obama printed in the October 24 issue of *Christian Courier* seems to divide everyone in the world in two camps: Normal people and Socialists. It appears that all others in the world are "socialists" while only "normal people" live in the USA.

Such an impression is quite unfortunate.

I suggest you carefully read: *Hope in Troubled Times* by Bob Goudswaard. Bob explains, among other things, the origin and effect of "Nation States."

August Guillaume,  
Edmonton, Alberta

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## Learning

# A writer's bootcamp

Cec Murphey is a prolific writer, with more than a hundred books to his credit. He cuts a wide swath through various genres, and is also known to other writers as a tough, but effective teacher.

When he came as a speaker to *Write! Canada* several years ago, his reputation preceded him. I imagined a caricature – nine feet tall, armed with a rapier dipped in red ink. To my surprise, I met a slender man with a full head of gray curls and a gentle demeanor. Still, I wasn't ready for his sharp editing skills, and I didn't sign up for his continuing class. Afterward I wondered if I had missed a unique opportunity.

A few years later Wayne Holmes accepted one of my stories for an anthology edited by Cec. When my submission came back to me with his edits, red comment boxes filled the pages. Novice writers don't argue with industry icons. I worked my way through his suggestions and resubmitted the story, happy to be included in such a project.

## Another opportunity

Then, a few months ago, a writer friend of mine told me she was hosting an intensive writer's clinic with Cec at her home in Waterloo. Tuition was expensive and the thought of sitting under Cec's tutelage was intimidating, but I saw the experience as an investment in my development as a writer. I registered with some trepidation.

A month prior to the clinic, we were to send a five-page manuscript to Cec, which he would edit and return. We could revise and resubmit the same piece twice more before the clinic began.

I chose a story I liked and worked it over several times. I asked myself, WWCD? (What would Cec do?) I eliminated passive verbs, rooted out anything that might be considered purple prose (overly dramatic), and double-checked spelling and punctuation. Then I beefed up the ending, hoping to give the story more takeaway value. Finally, after endless re-reading, I sent it in.

It was back on my inbox the next day. Three sentences comprised the accompanying e-mail: "Here it is. Please do not be discouraged. You have much to learn, but I think you can do it."

## Down and up

I stared at the words, embarrassed to be cut down to rookie status. Then I realized this was exactly what I had signed up for. I wanted to learn and grow as a writer. Mollycoddling wouldn't help.

With a deep breath I opened the attachment. A sea of red shone back from the screen. I read through each comment, agreeing with many and questioning others. He called my bolstered ending preachy. I knew it. That's what happens when I write with an agenda instead of from my heart. I closed the file.

A week later, on a dreary, wet day I walked to the mailbox. I had to face those dreadful red boxes and rework the piece. I felt sorry for myself. I should never have signed up for the clinic. Who did I think I was? I couldn't even complain to Jack because we both knew beforehand this would be difficult. I had told him I could handle it.

I reached into the mailbox. Between the bills and the junk mail was a hand-written envelope with a return address I didn't recognize. Back in the warmth of the kitchen I tore it open. The card inside carried encouragement from a retired farm couple living in Eastern Ontario. Faithful *Christian Courier* readers, they thanked me for my "down-to-earth writing" and compared my work with that of Jacob Eppinga. A smile spread across my face and a glimmer of confidence welled up inside me.

I set the card on the shelf above my computer and began the edits. Two hours later I proofread for the third time, then said a prayer and submitted the revised piece before I lost my nerve.

## Intangible Things

Heidi VanderSlikke

Cec returned it within hours. "Excellent improvement," he wrote. I opened the attachment and laughed out loud at a whole new set of red boxes. If that was excellent, I wondered what inept would look like.

## Letting someone win

I thought back to my childhood. When I was twelve, the kids in my neighborhood started playing chess. I lost as many games as I won. Then I began training with my dad. For two months I lost every game to him. Finally I managed a couple of stalemates.

One night I foresaw victory. I was certain to beat him within three moves. He declared checkmate in two. I stormed out of the room and sat pouting on the stairs. I heard my mother's voice, "Why can't you just let her win one time?"

My father calmly replied, "I can't let her win. If I let her win, she hasn't won and won't learn anything. She can do this. And when she does win, it will be real."

A week later I beat him. Success was sweet. Even better, in those months of playing my father I had become a competent strategist. There wasn't a kid on the block who could win against me. I was queen of the chessboard.

## A vulnerable spot

All my life I had learned best from the toughest teachers. Those who demanded much from me received my highest effort. Why was I having such a hard time now? I hated to admit it, but I knew the answer. Of all aspects of my life, it's in writing that I'm most vulnerable. Each one of those criticisms struck a raw chord of insecurity within me. Cec didn't put the lack of confidence there, he just poked it.

I prayed for courage to keep going, and asked a number of my friends to do the same for me. During our morning devotions, I asked Jack to pray that I wouldn't quit writing because of discouragement. He smiled and said, "I'm not worried about that. You won't quit. You can't not write. It's part of who you are."

## Through the fire

His words echoed in my mind as I drove to the first night of the clinic. He was right. I had boxes of journals and notebooks in my office and a computer full of writing files to prove it. The question wasn't whether I would write, but if I was willing to hone my craft and become the best writer I could be. The clinic was an important step in that direction.

After supper ten of us sat around the table. Cec passed out sheets with a summary of our most common mistakes. He said, "I know I've been hard on you, but I want you to be the best writers you can be." I belonged there.

We were able to read each other's work. I was relieved to see as much red lettering in everyone else's files as in my own. I was honored to be part of this talented group. For the next two days we worked independently on our laptops. Sometimes fingers flew across the keys, often silence prevailed as we re-read our work. Conversation was sparse except at mealtimes. We deluged Cec with completed manuscripts, which he edited and returned with amazing speed.

By Friday afternoon we were bleary-eyed and stiff from sitting, but better writers, refined by Cec-fire. Boot camp for baby writers wasn't easy. But I learned a lot. Most importantly, I was reminded that writing well – much like living well – takes time, effort and a willingness to improve. It was a privilege – painful, but worthwhile – for which I'll always be grateful.

Heidi VanderSlikke lives in Harriston, Ont.  
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# Night of terror

Bert Witvoet

It was 70 years ago November 10 that Germany awoke from a hellish Night of Broken Glass. It was the morning after Krystalnacht. The event is strongly linked to our family, because my wife, Alice, was born on Krystalnacht. She also turned 70 on November 10. In many ways, this horrible event was the beginning of the Holocaust. How did it come about?

In November 1938, a minor Nazi diplomat was shot dead by a Polish-Jewish youth in Paris. Wanting revenge and needing a pretext to act on his violent hatred of the Jews, Hitler ordered a seven-day campaign of terror against the Jews in Germany to be organised by Himmler and the SS.

On the night of the 9th November, the campaign started. Stormtroopers began street violence against Jewish shops, synagogues, and institutions. In all, 200 synagogues were burned, homes were destroyed with axes and sledgehammers, people were thrown from windows into the street, kicked to death, beaten with fists and truncheons, stabbed, and shot. Torah scrolls, and Jewish works of history and philosophy were burned.

The violence left 100 dead, and it was also at this time that nearly one in every ten of the Jews left in the German Reich were rounded up for detention in concentration camps such as Dachau. A huge amount of damage was done to Jewish property but the Jewish community was ordered to pay a one billion mark fine to pay for the eventual clear-up. Jews were also forced to scrub the streets clean.

Not a very pleasant time to be born, you may say. But both of us think of it as an honour to be tangentially linked to this persecuted people, even though the circumstance is extremely sorrowful.

There is so much historical significance to this event, especially if you place it in the context of the struggle between the forces of darkness and the Kingdom of light. Not that I place Germany on one side of the struggle and the Jews on the other side. When it comes to evil in this world, there are no sides.

I'm sure that God suffered much when he saw two great nations so confused by the cloud of evil that had fallen over Europe. God loved the Germans as much as he loved the Jews, but he had to let this event happen so that Satan would not cry "Interference!" and so that Christ might eventually triumph in the only battle that counts – the epic battle to eradicate evil from this world.



## Stewardship

### Taste of Africa dinner guests urged to embrace AIDS

Sonya VanderVeen Feddema

ST. CATHARINES, Ont – Moses Moini knows firsthand the devastating impact of HIV/AIDS. A former refugee from Sudan, he is the Refugee Coordinator for Mennonite Central Committee Ontario.

Moini spoke at the Taste of Africa fund-raising dinner on October 3 to an audience of about one hundred people at his home church, Covenant Christian Reformed Church.

Moini's experience with HIV/AIDS began in the mid-eighties. Since then the pandemic has spread beyond what anyone could have imagined at that time. To put the adverse effects of AIDS in perspective, Moini invited the audience to walk with him on his journey.

He asked them to imagine the following scenario: that their life savings had been lost; that the nation's human resources – doctors, professors, teachers, administrators, and farmers – were wiped out at an unprecedented rate; that the only booming business in the country was the casket industry while all the other sectors were collapsing; that their relatives, friends, coworkers, and neighbors had died, and many more would soon follow; and that orphans were left under the care of grandparents who had limited or no source of income. Moini concluded, "Now, step out of that imagination mode and apply this reality to life!"

#### Great expectations

As a freshman in Juba University in Sudan, Moini had his first experience with HIV/AIDS. His friend, with whom he had gone to high school, contracted the virus.



Juba University

Moini recalled how before that their families had worked hard in their gardens so that the surplus harvest could be sold to send the young men to elementary and high school. "On our part" Moini said, "we acknowledged their efforts and worked hard at school. Our goal wasn't only to pass exams, but to go further in our studies, get good jobs, and then begin to support our parents. That was their dream. That was also our dream."

Years later, Moini and his friend took university entrance exams. For four months they anxiously awaited the results. When they were released, Moini learned that he and his friend had both passed.

"Our names were read over the radio," Moini told the audience. "Hearing one's name on a radio in a village with no running water, no electricity, and no paved roads, provided one with instant celebrity status. From nowhere, both my friend and I rose to the ranks of the community's most famous. We rode high. Our parents rode high. Our community was the proudest!"

#### Devastating development

The friends worked hard during their first year at Juba University, excited that they were realizing their dreams. But shortly before their final exams, Moini's friend became ill. After several months at the Khartoum University Teaching Hospital, his friend died. Moini, however, did not know the cause of death because a diagnosis of HIV/AIDS was kept confidential during those years.

"After the postmortem was announced, I was devastated," Moini said. "My friend had died of AIDS! His dreams for the future, and his vision for his community and family were turned upside down. The family and community, which at one time rode high, suffered a major setback. HIV/AIDS is a blow our society continues to struggle with until this day!"

#### Call to embrace

While sharing his story, one of the millions of stories of hopes dashed because of HIV/AIDS, Moini challenged his audience to realize that the Christian community cannot afford to stand back and watch the spread of the pandemic without responding in Christ's name.

As participants of the Taste of Africa fund-raiser shared delicious African food, listened to the hope-filled songs of the Salvation Singers (a group of former refugees from Liberia), prayed, listened to Scripture, and donated money, they responded to CRWRC's call to Embrace AIDS.

The dinner had been organized as a response to the Christian Reformed World Relief Committee's (CRWRC) Embrace AIDS campaign. In

## Re-committing and recording

When Jesus was walking through Israel with his disciples, there were many people who flocked to see him – many who were eager to see and hear this "rabbi." If you and I were around at that time, I'm sure we would be in the crowd of onlookers and those seeking miraculous healing.

Listening and learning from others – that is how we grow. Yet, having the time, the ability, health, aptitude and the resources to hear and to understand someone who teaches is a privilege. In the case of the onlookers during Jesus' earthly walk, his teaching was especially well received because Jesus was known to speak with authority, with a cutting clarity, and without compromise or fear about what the authorities might say. However, even Jesus' words are little more than entertainment if the teaching does not lead to changes in everyday living. It is in the application of the teaching, where "the-rubber-hits-the-road," that the message comes alive. Similarly, a personal exercise of reviewing and reflecting on past experiences is nice but of little value if it doesn't lead to change. An effective time-out for a review and reflection can lead to a refreshed sense of perspective and commitment for service.

#### More than curiosity

One day, as Jesus entered Jericho, Zacchaeus (like almost everyone else in his hometown) heard he was coming. Zacchaeus decided that he *must* see Jesus. However, Zacchaeus had two disadvantages working against him: he was very short and he was also very unpopular – even hated. He was labeled a "sinner" or traitor. He could not hope that anyone would allow him room near the edge of the road, so he ran ahead and climbed into a tree. There he waited for Jesus to pass by. Did Zacchaeus have something in mind? Was there something specific he was hoping for?

Jesus must have known what he was up to because, when Jesus drew near, he called out to Zachaeus and simply told him that he had to dine at his house that day. Jesus knew what lingered in Zachaeus' heart and addressed it. In return, a stunned Zacchaeus made a bold and very public commitment then and there. First of all, he declared that he would give half of *all* his possessions to the poor, and then, secondly, he announced that he would repay anyone who claimed that Zachaeus had cheated him – *four* times the amount! Then Jesus said to him: "Today salvation has come to this house, because this man, too, is a son of Abraham." (Luke 19:9) Zacchaeus had his life given back to him and, frankly, there is no greater gift than to have a "real" life in Jesus!

Zachaeus made a very public commitment to serve. Jesus forgave him and blessed him. Luke recorded this incident for us in the Bible, so we too, may learn from

the testimony of this man who lived so long ago.

#### Plan to commit

Last issue, in this column, I asked you to review how you have engaged your time and talents in God's great Kingdom enterprise and to reflect on God's faithfulness to you. Such a review and reflection sets the stage for considering how you plan to commit your time, talents and resources for impact in God's great Kingdom enterprise. Keeping a journal or diary, and recording what you re-commit to give of yourself for God's Kingdom, helps you to have the discipline to carry out your commitments by holding yourself accountable. Actually writing it down – ink on paper – makes your personal covenant with God so much more tangible. Realizing your goals in re-commitment brings contentment and blessing!

Recording what I commit to in God's Kingdom is not something I do naturally. In fact, I am sure Satan would rather not have me do it. No, I'm sure he would prefer that I have no visible reminder, and that, instead I forget and neglect and allow all the cares and enticements of this world to snuff out my commitment! Recording helps me be accountable and disciplined and be a good steward.

#### Stewardly tip: Enabling firstfruits giving – A reader shares:

"After graduating and starting work, my wife and I found giving our 'first-fruits' to the Lord very tough. Not only did the monthly 'regulars' add up to so much (mortgage, utilities, loan repayments), but living on a shoe-string budget for years built up a powerful temptation to finally spend more now. Before graduation, an older and wiser couple told us, 'Create a separate account for 10 percent of your gross income (before taxes) and have it transferred automatically – then disperse it as God leads you. You'll find it quite a blessing, especially at the end of the year, to 'get rid of' the accumulated funds!' That is what we are doing, and, by the grace and provision of God, we've never looked back."

**Readers:** Share your 'Stewardly tips' so that we all can make better use of the resources God has entrusted to us. Submit your suggestions (by mail to *Christian Courier* or by email to my address below), and provide your contact information so that we can acknowledge your contribution or ask you for more details.

Next issue: Year-end wrap-up

Rick DeGraaf works for Christian Stewardship Services in Markham, Ontario.  
Rick's email: rickd@cssservices.ca



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2007 CRWRC, the relief agency of the CRC in North America, took up the challenge to raise \$3,000,000 for AIDS work in Africa, Asia, and Latin America, and to raise awareness about the facts of this devastating disease.

Anyone interested in learning more about CRWRC's Embrace AIDS campaign can check the campaign website ([www.embraceaids.org](http://www.embraceaids.org)) for ideas, facts and stories.

Sonya ([sonyavf55@hotmail.com](mailto:sonyavf55@hotmail.com)) lives in St. Catharines, Ontario.



## Church

## Evangelicals optimistic about Obama Presidency

Michelle A. Vu

WASHINGTON – Some prominent evangelical leaders said the day after the recent American election that they are optimistic about working together with the Obama administration, and even noted that relationships have already been built by the campaign's faith outreach arm.

The Christian leaders did acknowledge, however, that differences will continue to exist between themselves, their churches and Obama, but pointed out that a growing number of evangelicals are looking to find whatever common ground is possible on culture-war issues such as abortion and homosexuality.

"The strategy is very different from the past. The religious right practiced this zero sum game where somebody else has to lose for us to win," asserted Rev. Richard Cizik, vice president of the National Association of Evangelicals, during an election analysis teleconference on Nov. 5.

"And our [centrist evangelical] strategy is a common good that says we are all in this together," he said. "That means we learned as evangelicals how to collaborate with whom we disagree."

Dr. David Gushee, professor of Christian Ethics at Atlanta-based Mercer University, went as far as to maintain that the religious right was in decline and that it is up to the right to decide to change and adopt a broader agenda.

"I think that there is clearly a fracture between the evangelical right or Christian right and in many ways the rest of the country and the rest of the evangelical community," Gushee contended.

He questioned if there will be a permanent fracture between

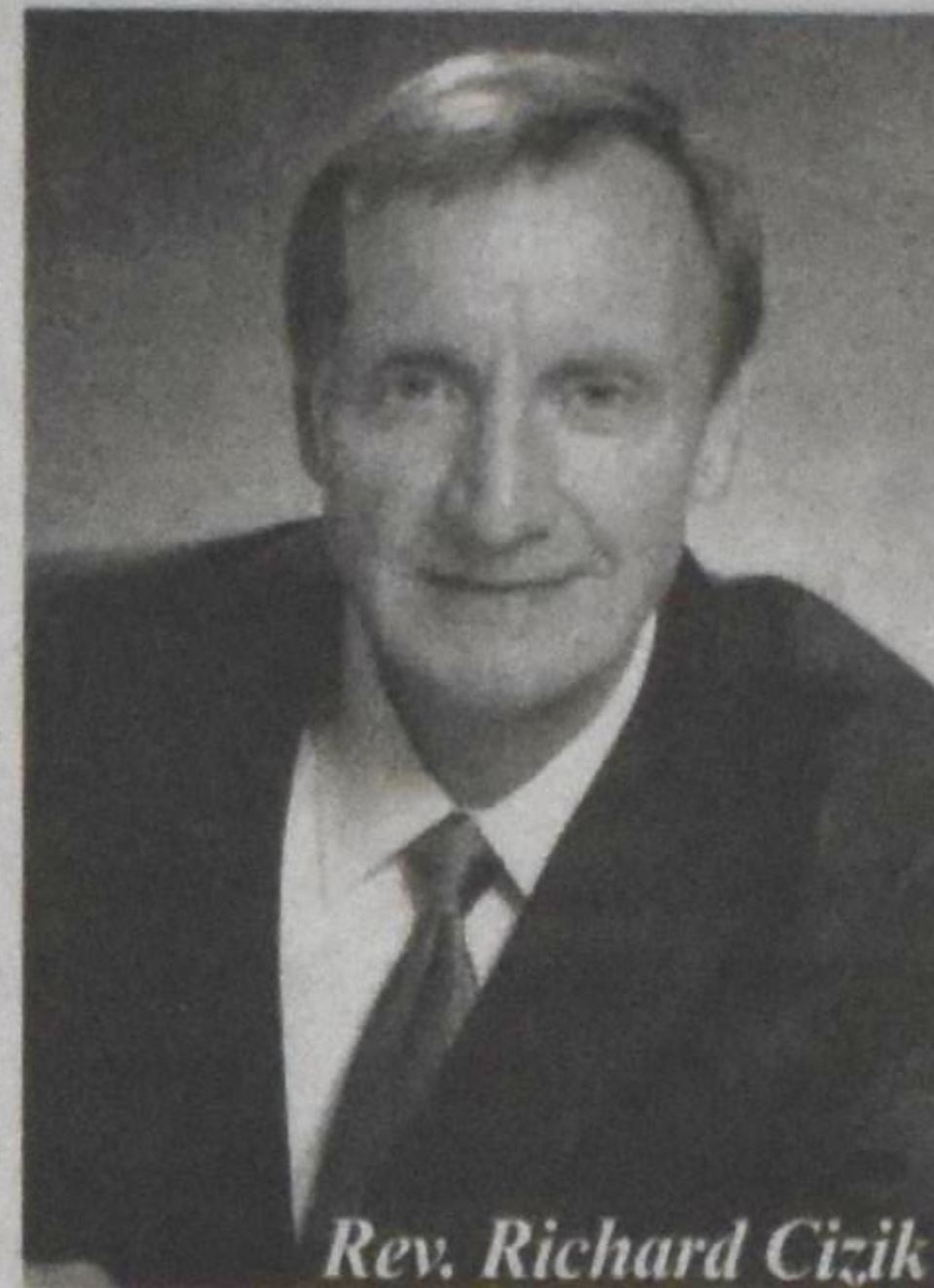
the Christian right and the rest of the evangelical body, and contrasted the right with centrist and progressive evangelicals who are "well positioned" to work with the government and the new administration on issues as broad as torture, the environment, immigration and nuclear weapon production.

"A posture that says we don't have to agree on everything but we can work on these things together is going to put us in a better position to be a constructive player in the next four years than the stance that the apocalypse is upon us because Barack Obama has won the election," Gushee asserted.

Both Gushee and Cizik commented on the change in evangelical perspective on social justice issues, which evangelicals increasingly see as values issues caused by a moral problem.

"I am optimistic, as David expressed he is, that this president understands problems in terms of not just of technical revolution but in terms of the moral complexity," Cizik said. "And that's a good sign."

While Obama widely lost to Republican candidate Sen. John McCain among evangelical voters (75 percent to 24 percent) his support among evangelicals was five percentage points higher than that of Democratic presidential candidate Sen. John Kerry in 2004.



Rev. Richard Cizik

## Near 90 percent of Muslims vote for Obama despite differences on abortion, marriage

WASHINGTON, D.C. (CNSNews.com) – Nearly 90 percent of American Muslims supported Democrat Barack Obama – and did so on the basis of economic and foreign policy concerns, top Muslim groups said in Washington, D.C., at the end of election week in the U.S.

Muslims overlooked differences they had with the President-elect's positions on same-sex marriage and abortion, just as Catholics and other Christians did, said the Muslim Taskforce on Civil Rights and Elections (AMT).

Although it's likely that virtually all Muslims voted in favor of the same-sex marriage ban on the ballot in California, a position at odds with Obama's, they found enough common ground with the candidate in other areas that were central to their concerns in the 2008 election cycle, according to Mahdi Bray, executive director the Muslim-American Society Freedom Foundation.

"Yes, Muslims believe marriage should be between a man and a woman but like other groups they split their vote," Bray told CNSNews.com.

The AMT – an umbrella organization that includes 11 other Islamic groups, including the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR), the American Muslim Alliance, the Islamic Circle of North America, the Muslim Alliance in North America and the Muslim Student Association-National – gathered at the National Press Club to report on the electoral preferences of Muslim voters and their level of participation.

Almost 90 percent of the respondents to a poll commissioned by AMT voted in favor of Obama. Just two per cent supported Sen. John McCain (R-Ariz.), the Republican candidate.

The AMT survey also found that Muslims identified with the Democratic Party in higher percentages than with the GOP. Over two-thirds of the respondents said they were Democrats and only four per cent said they were Republicans. The remaining 29 percent described themselves as independents.

The AMT poll sampled about 600 Muslims, who were mostly concentrated in Illinois, New York, Virginia, Michigan,



Mahdi Bray, executive director of the Muslim-American Society Freedom Foundation

Tuesday's turnout among Muslim voters was the highest ever recorded, with 95 per cent of respondents telling pollsters they had voted, according to the AMT findings.

Over 60 percent of Muslims put the economy at the top of their list of concerns – far outpacing other issues. Only 16 percent of American Muslims said the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan were their top concerns.

"The economy really stood out here," Nihad Awad, the executive director of CAIR, said in an interview. "Muslims share the same concerns as other Americans about the economic picture. They are worried about losing their homes and losing credit. So it's logical to see this result right now. I would say that civil rights are also very central."

A survey of over 1,000 Muslims taken earlier in the year – long before the stock market slide – showed that civil rights and education were also top issues.

Awad called on the new president-elect to shut down the detention center in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba as way of "restoring America's moral standing in the world."

AMT Chairman Agha Saeed told CNSNews.com that Republicans must make it clear that they are willing to uphold America's constitutional principles – and to promote equality, in particular – if they expect to gain any traction with Muslim voters in the future.

"Are they going to be a party of bigotry and exclusion, or are they going to be the party of Abraham Lincoln?" Saeed asked.

However, Saeed also said that is not necessary to have complete agreement across the board to attract a substantial number of voters as this past election demonstrated.

## Head of National Association of Evangelicals lobbies creation care in Australia

SYDNEY (ChristianPost.com) – The National Association of Evangelicals, of which the Christian Reformed Church is a member, is making headlines in Australia via its president, Rev. Richard Cizik. Cizik was in Australia recently to lobby for climate change legislation and to try to get evangelicals Down Under more active in the creation care movement.

Cizik met with Prime Minister Kevin Rudd as well as the opposition party's environment spokesman Greg Hunt. Cizik, who was named by *Time* magazine as one of its 100 most influential people in 2008, asserts that climate change is a moral issue and that evangelicals have a biblical obligation to protect God's creation.

"I say to my fellow evangelicals, when you die, God is not going ask you how old the earth is or whether or not he created it in six days or six billion years," Cizik said on the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) radio. "He is going to say, what did you do with what I created. And we have to have an answer. We have to say we took care of it when it was hurting."

### Not without opposition

While Cizik has been widely applauded by both the secular and Christian world for getting evangelicals involved in the climate change discussion, his advocacy has not been without controversy and opposition.

A group of well-known and influential conservative Christian leaders last year wrote a letter to the NAE board seeking them to either restrain Cizik from speaking about global warming or press him to resign. The dozens of conservative evangelical leaders argued that Cizik was misrepresenting the evangelical voice because some do not believe that global warming is real, or they have concluded it's mainly human-made. Some Australian evangelicals agree. The Archbishop of Sydney, George Pell, for one, has said he's a climate change skeptic. Pell is a biblically conservative Anglican.

### Pro-green voice

In the end, in Cizik's case, the NAE board sided with him and he continues to be an outspoken advocate of Christian involvement in the climate change issue.

Despite some protests by its members, the National Council of Churches in Australia is supporting Cizik's effort to promote the green evangelical movement in the country.

"I think more and more not just evangelicals but Christians throughout Australia are becoming concerned about these issues," said John Henderson, general secretary of the NCC in Australia on ABC radio.

Henderson said that his group plans to educate Christians in the next few years about what Christian teachings and practices says about the issue. Combining Christian teaching with science, the NCC hopes to get churches to agree on a common policy on the issue.

"If we can mobilize Christians around Australia towards better attitudes towards the environment and responsible energy use and the like, then that is going to go a long way to helping the whole community," Henderson said.

"Politics involves partial agreements," he observed. "The Republican Party base did not have agreement with John McCain and the Democratic Party did not always agree with Obama. It is impossible to have complete uniformity."

But there was strong unity with Obama on the economy, universal healthcare and immigration policy, Saeed suggested.

"Obama may have captured the imagination of the Muslim community when he called for negotiated settlements and diplomatic recognition," he said. "This is what differentiated him first from [Sen.] Hillary Clinton (D-N.Y.) and second John McCain. He campaigned on a sense of newness and change that could be beneficial to the whole world."



## Church

### Did 2,000-year-old ossuary hold the bones of James, Christ's brother?



#### Jerusalem forgery trial nears collapse

JERUSALEM (MFS) – A judge is set to throw out charges against experts accused of faking a stone box that claimed to offer the first physical proof of the existence of Christ – raising the possibility once again that the box could be genuine.

The discovery of the 2,000-year-old ossuary, or bone box, bearing the words, “James, son of Joseph, brother of Jesus,” was regarded as one of the greatest archaeological discoveries when it emerged nearly a decade ago. But other experts decided the inscription on the ‘price-less’ limestone artifact had been added at a later date. It was dismissed as a fake and Israeli authorities began criminal investigations.

But recently a three-year forgery trial in Israel was close to collapse, reopening the possibility it might indeed be physical evidence for the life of Jesus and his brother James, who Protestants view as a leader in the early church and the writer of the biblical book of James.

Jerusalem judge Aharon Farkash asked prosecutors trying Israeli collector Oded Golan: “Have you really proved beyond a reasonable doubt that these artifacts are fakes as charged in the indictment?”

The 20-inch long empty box, apparently found near the Mount of Olives, was sold to Golan by an Arab antiquities dealer. Golan was arrested and, with four others, charged in 2004 with 18 counts of forgery, fraud and damaging archaeological artefacts. They were accused of taking valuable objects and adding inscriptions to massively increase their value.

Charges against two men were dropped and only Golan and antiquities dealer Robert Deutsch, the alleged leaders of the forgery ring, remain on trial. They deny all charges.

### Episcopal Church in U.S. loses 3rd diocese

NEW YORK – (Christian Post) A third theologically conservative diocese has broken away from the liberal Episcopal Church in a long-running dispute over interpretation of the Bible, including the passages about homosexuality. The Diocese of Quincy, Ill., took the vote at its annual meeting that ended Nov. 8.

Two other dioceses – San Joaquin, based in Fresno, Calif., and Pittsburgh – have already left the Episcopal Church. On Nov. 16 the Diocese of Fort Worth, Texas, was to have voted whether to follow suit.

The three dioceses are aligning with the like-minded Anglican Province of the Southern Cone, based in Argentina. The 77-million-member Anglican fellowship, which includes the U.S. Episcopal Church, has roots in the missionary work of the Church of England.

Meanwhile, National Episcopal leaders are reorganizing the seceding dioceses with local parishioners who want

to stay in the church. Complex legal fights have already started in San Joaquin over control of diocesan churches, property and assets.

The Quincy diocese, based in Peoria, has 24 churches and missions and about 1,800 members. Clergy and lay delegates approved withdrawal with a 95 to 26 vote.

“This decision was not made lightly,” said the Rev. John Spencer, a diocesan spokesperson. “We have talked and prayed about this for a very long time.”

The Anglican Church of Nigeria has formed a Virginia-based network of Episcopal independent parishes, called the Convocation of Anglicans in North America. Some individual Episcopal parishes have separately aligned with Anglican provinces in Kenya, Rwanda and Uganda.

Bishop Robert Duncan, head of the now independent Diocese of Pittsburgh, is among leaders trying to form a North American province for conservative Episcopalians.

### Excerpt from a sermon on Psalm 98

*“Sing to the Lord a new song,  
for he has done marvelous things;  
his right hand and his holy arm  
have worked salvation for him.”* Psalm 98:1

#### Adrian Dieleman

Did you hear what Psalm 98 says? It says that everyone should sing. Everyone! It says that every person of faith, every believer in God, every recipient of God’s goodness ought to sing. In verse 4, it says, “Shout for joy to the LORD, all the earth, burst into jubilant song with music....” Everyone. No exceptions.

I read this past week of an amusing incident in the First United Methodist Church of Tulsa.

There was a member of the church choir who just could not sing. This fellow flattened every note; he was never in tune. One day several of the other choir members complained to the choir director about this guy and what he was doing to the music they sang.

The choir director told these other choir members he would have a talk with the man. So he pulled the man aside after the next choir practice, and he offered him singing lessons, but the man said, “No, I don’t want any special treatment, I just want to be a regular member of the choir.”

In desperation the choir director told the pastor, “Listen, I can’t work with this guy. He can’t sing and he can’t take a hint. He ruins every piece of music we try to sing. People are dropping out of choir because of this man. Either he goes or I go!”

So, the pastor called this man and asked him to drop by the office. When he arrived, the pastor tried every way possible to get this fellow out of the choir. “Would you like to be an usher?” “No, if I was an usher, I wouldn’t be able to sing in the choir!” “Well, how about being head usher?” “Nope, I’d rather sing in the choir.” How about counting the money after we take up the offering?” “No, because then I wouldn’t be able to sing in the choir....” The pastor offered him everything. “The Board of Trustees? Member of the Administrative Board?” “Nope, I just want to sing in the choir.”

Finally, the preacher decided to level with him. “Look, friend, the plain truth is I want you to quit the choir because I’ve had at least a dozen people come to me and tell me that you just can’t sing!”

The man looked at him, and said, “So??? Big deal! I’ve had 30 people tell me you can’t preach – but I haven’t tried to make you quit!”

Our text tells us that everyone is to sing. Even the ones who can’t sing are to sing. All of us! One doesn’t have to be a trained musician to sing to God. The simple songs of children or the out-of-tune songs of a tone-deaf person can be sung to God. God is pleased when a person whistles a tune while they’re walking along, when someone sings in the shower because of the simple joy of being alive, or when someone hums a song.

*Rev. Dieleman is pastor of Trinity Christian Reformed Church, in Visalia, California. The sermon from which this excerpt was taken was preached on March 7, 1999*

### Christian monks arrested in Jerusalem church brawl

JERUSALEM (CNH) – Police rushed into one of Christianity’s most prominent churches two weeks ago and arrested two monks after an argument between them erupted into a brawl next to the site of Jesus’ tomb.

The clash broke out between Armenian and Greek Orthodox monks in the Church of the Holy Sepulcher, believed by many to be the site of Jesus’ crucifixion, burial and resurrection.

It began as Armenian clergymen marched in an annual procession commemorating the 4th-century discovery of the cross believed to have been used to crucify Jesus. It ended with the arrival of dozens of riot policemen who separated the sides, seizing a bearded Armenian monk in a red-and-pink robe and a black-clad Greek Orthodox monk with a bloody gash on his forehead. Both men were taken away in handcuffs.

Six Christian sects divide control of the ancient church. They regularly fight over turf and influence, and Israeli police are occasionally forced to intervene.

The feud revolves around a demand by the Greek Orthodox to post a monk inside the Edicule – the ancient structure built on what they believe to be the tomb of Jesus – during the Armenian

procession. The Armenians refused, and when they tried to march, the Greek Orthodox monks blocked their way.

“We were keeping resistance so that the procession could not pass through ... and establish a right that they don’t have,” said a young Greek Orthodox monk with a cut next to his left eye. The monk, who gave his name as Serafim, said he sustained the wound when an Armenian punched him from behind and broke his glasses.

#### What about 70 times 7?

Father Pakrat of the Armenian Patriarchate said the Greek demand was “against the status quo arrangement and against the internal arrangement of the Holy Sepulcher.” He said the Greeks attacked first.

Archbishop Aristarchos, the chief secretary of the Greek Orthodox patriarchate, said his monks had not initiated the violence. “I’m sorry that these events happened in front of the Holy Sepulcher, which is the most holy religious monument of Christianity,” he said.

After the brawl, the church was crowded with police holding

assault rifles and equipped with riot gear, standing beside Golgotha, where Jesus is believed to have been crucified, and the long smooth stone marking the place where tradition holds his body was laid out.

Police spokesperson Micky Rosenfeld said police were forced to intervene after fighting was reported. They arrested two monks, one from each side, he said.

The feud is only one of a bewildering array of rivalries among churchmen in the Holy Sepulcher.

The government has long wanted to build a fire exit in the church, which regularly fills with thousands of pilgrims and has only one main door, but the plan is on indefinite hold because the sects cannot agree where the exit will be built. In another example, a ladder placed on a ledge over the entrance sometime in the 19th century has remained there ever since because of a dispute over who has the authority to take it down.

More recently, a spat between Ethiopian and Coptic Christians is delaying badly needed renovations to a rooftop monastery that engineers say could collapse.



## Memoirs

## Sights and sounds of my life

Carl Tuyl

Only a few weeks ago I was in Prague, capital of the Czech republic. My companion and I spent a day in the old Jewish section of that city. We visited the oldest synagogue of what used to be the ghetto. It was a house of worship dating from the early fifteenth century. On the walls of that synagogue I saw in hand-written paint the names of 82,000 people, 77,000 of whom were killed in Nazi concentration camps. One of those camps, the infamous one in Theresienstadt, is very close to the city of Prague. It is the site where 77,000 men women and children were killed like so many cattle. It had taken five years to get those names on the wall of the synagogue. My companion was so moved and shocked by that sight that she wept bitterly. She had to leave the building.

There is in the city of Prague only one small synagogue still used for worship. Before the war the Jewish section of the city was a populous neighbourhood, but the people who lived there were decimated by the blond brutes that spread over Europe like a medieval pest. All that is left of the Jewish section besides empty synagogues is an age-old cemetery where people are buried in layers with many bodies on top of each other.

## Painful flashbacks

Standing there in that synagogue in Prague my thoughts went back to my own time in one of those portals of hell. My time of imprisonment began at a prison in Groningen. I was eighteen years old. I was caught in a night-time raid with a German soldier holding a pistol to my face. I had been involved with the activities of a resistance group in some very insignificant way. That prison in Groningen is now gone and only a marble stone with inscription in an arcade commemorates the suffering that took place there.

The sounds that echoed in that space are difficult to describe. They were sounds of terrible pain mixed with the dull thuds of beatings. I don't even know how long I

was kept there. I know that at the end of my stay there was many a dark blue spot on my body. I did not reveal any secrets, simply because I did not know any. Had I known I don't think that I would have been able to keep my mouth shut.

## Permanent companions

From there I was transported to the Amersfoort concentration camp. Upon arrival I was shaved bald and supplied with some rags of clothing. There was suffering in that place – suffering that defies description. The sounds of that place were also sounds of pain and agony: sounds of German curses, the sound of wheelbarrows in which the bodies of prisoners who had died that day were brought to the square where we were counted mornings and evenings. The countings were almost endless procedures by which the S.S. soldiers wanted to be sure that nobody had escaped.

Sounds can inhabit your mind, put down roots there and never leave you. I can still hear the wailing sound of the Jewish prisoner whose beard was set aflame by the guards. He was one of the selected victims of that day, and, yes, his body was brought in at night in a wheelbarrow. I can still hear the sound of the S.S. men commanding the whole camp population to do what they called "auf und nieder." Upon the command "nieder" we all had to go down on the ground, wet or dry, and upon "auf," we got up again. That exercise could go on for long periods of time. One sight also not easily forgotten was the sight of my own ribs sticking out on my body. Hunger, and I don't mean appetite, was constant. All through

my memory are the twisted sights and sounds of a time that cannot be measured by days or weeks or years.

## An unfailing bulwark

One of the unforgettable sights and sounds of that time was that of a most unusual church service. It took place in one of the far corners of the barrack where we were housed. It was a Sunday evening. Six



Amersfoort concentration camp

or seven people were in attendance. There was no Bible, no sermon, no collection, no minister, no singing – just a small group of people. An old gentlemen invited us to recite Bible verses that we remembered. I will never forget the verse that one of the inmates recited. It wasn't even a Bible verse. It was the first line of the well-known hymn written by Luther in the time of his distress. The gentleman spoke softly in Dutch: "Een vaste burcht is onze God, een toevlucht voor de zijnen." ("A mighty fortress is our God, a bulwark never failing.") The knowledge of God as refuge and strength is perhaps not so easily attainable at a time of three square meals, a two-stall garage, and plasma T.V., but I can tell you at times when you search for potato peels in the garbage cans, when you are in utter poverty, hunger, agony and distress, God can come so close that you can indeed agree with Doctor Martin and the writer of Psalm 46: "God is our refuge and our strength."

## A rebirth of sorts

Let me tell you two more sights of that time. The first one is the sight of surrender to hopelessness. It happened to many – the time when you give up, the day when you don't care anymore whether they kill you today or tomorrow – the time when even your hunger doesn't cause pain to your body anymore – the time when a prisoner would withdraw into himself and create that imaginary impenetrable fort where nobody could touch or hurt him anymore. It is a sort of trance-like state. I have seen it. Prisoners would shuffle around like zombies, visibly already out of this world, and unable to react even to torture and hurt. Psychiatrists in later years called it the K.Z. – the concentration camp syndrome.

I think I have been close to it. But let me tell you how I, as it were, was born again. In the first period of my time at Amersfoort I fantasized about being able to escape. At night on my bunk I devised these intricate plans that would bring me to freedom. I also conjured up in my mind the most wonderful meals and dinners, worthy of royalty. But

after a while, reality put a dreary end to my dreams, and a sort of dull hopelessness took its place.

But one night, I was born again. It was and still is one of those unforgettable, decisive life-affirming moments. It happened after midnight. We were already asleep when the S.S. entered the barrack and with their curses and beatings chased every body to the camp square where we were counted time and time again. Obviously the count did not match their numbers for it went on and on. We stood there for hours. It was a dark and rather cold night. We were commanded to take off our caps. "Mutzen ab" was the command. And there we stood – I guess about a thousand prisoners. Tired and cold and afraid. I stood way in the back. At one moment the moon glimpsed from behind the clouds, and I saw that moonlight reflected on a thousand bald heads. It was such an unbelievable crazy sight that it made me smile. And then I caught myself smiling. And with and in that smile I took hold again of life, and determined for myself that I would survive. God our ever-present help in trouble reminded me in that smile that he would be at my side.

## Hebrew prayers

From Amersfoort I was transported to a camp close to the Polish border where, strangely enough, life was a bit easier. The guards were not S.S. soldiers but much older men who, I think, wanted the war to end and go home. My brother, who was arrested a year later, was saved by what he called: "a good German." The man pushed him into a dark alley when the prisoners were about to be loaded into a truck.

I remember one of those trucks in the camp where I was. It was loaded with Jewish prisoners – and I mean "loaded." I saw the scene from a distance but I am sure that those people inside that truck must have been lying on top of each other. They – and we all – knew where they were going. It was a journey into eternity. Strangely, from inside that truck came the sound of singing. I can still hear it at times. It must have been in the Hebrew language. Maybe it was a prayer. The sound died down as the truck left the gate. But in some way that sound has traveled with me along the years, for sometimes, unexpectedly, it sounds in my ears again. Some years ago I visited that campsite with my son. The barracks are long gone, earth has covered the graves, but the memory is still there – like a scar that can never be removed.

To be continued in the December 8 issue of CC.

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Jewish cemetery in Prague



## History

# Dutch Christians, Jews and World War II

Bert den Boggende

Over the years *Christian Courier* has published several articles about Dutch Christians who personally helped and rescued Jews during World War II. This article is somewhat different. While I was born during the war, I have no recollections of it. With the help of a novel and several scholarly books I will try to highlight some aspects not really touched upon in previously published articles. When the war broke out there were about 14,000 German Jews in the Netherlands out of a total of about 140,000 Jews. It may be noted here that 100,000 did not survive the holocaust. Just at a time when more Jews tried to flee Germany the Dutch government, like all the others, closed its borders.

In 1984 Jan de Hartog, a Dutch Quaker now residing in New Jersey, published his novel *Star of Peace* (New York: Harper & Row), a story about captain Joris Kuiper and 250 German Jews. Upon boarding the *Star of Peace* in Hamburg in July 1939, the Jews experienced Nazi-orchestrated violence and anti-Semitism. Kuiper's old ship, which he had inherited three years earlier at the death of his father, was hardly suitable to take in so many passengers.

All the Jews on board the ship had visas for Uruguay, but upon arrival in that country it became apparent that the Nazis had falsified them, burdening them with a new form of humiliation. The legal attaché of the Dutch embassy in Uruguay advised Kuiper to return the Jews to Germany. Kuiper felt he could not do that. Not only had he witnessed Nazi violence, but his faith also made that impossible. Until his father's death he had been a wild boozier and womanizer, but the death had so shaken him that he experienced a conversion.

## Try the United States

Kuiper asked the attaché if he could secretly land the Jews in another Latin American country, but she told him that as soon as they would be discovered they would be returned to Germany. Only in the United States might they be successful if the media knew about their landing before the government would. Kuiper prepared the Jews for such a secret landing in Florida, but somehow the US coastguard knew about Kuiper's intention and prevented him several times from executing his plan. By the end of August he was near Long Island and had run out of food and coal.

The Americans were willing to supply him with food and coal but insisted that he not land the Jews. Even the Dutch ambassador, fearing tension between the two governments, sent a naval commodore to persuade Kuiper to change his mind. Could Kuiper not have landed on a British colony in the Caribbean? Not really. The British would have immediately sent the Jews back to Germany. What about Canada? As Irving Abella and Harold



Dutch Jewish men rounded up by German soldiers in Amsterdam, The Netherlands

Troper have shown in *None Is Too Many* (Toronto: Lester & Orpen Dennys, 1983), Jews were not welcome in Canada.

The book's title was taken from a comment made by a senior Canadian official in 1939. Its reference to a ship called the *St. Louis* indicates that De Hartog's novel was based on a real incident. In May 1939 the *St. Louis* left Hamburg with 907 Jews destined for Cuba. But, upon arrival in Havana, the Jews found out that their visas were not recognized. No Latin American country was willing to accept them, and the US coastguard made sure the ship could not land. As a last resort, Prime Minister Mackenzie King was asked to help out, but he felt this was not a Canadian problem, and his Quebec lieutenant and minister of justice Ernest Lapointe was emphatically opposed to the admission of these refugees. The *St. Louis* returned to Germany with its 907 Jews. As will be seen at the end of the novel, Kuiper had a different solution.

## Constant opposition

Throughout the novel people tried to dissuade Kuiper, sometimes pointing out practical problems, sometimes arguing that he was mistaken in his faith. Pertinent here is the attempt by an old Dutch naval chaplain, accompanying the Dutch naval commodore, who was also a minister of Kuiper's Dutch Reformed Church. According to the chaplain, Kuiper was misguided, having "usurped the inner certainty of the truly humble disciple of Christ." Kuiper wavered for a moment, wondering if he had "been misreading the Bible all these years." The chaplain hints that he has, and the two spar for a while with biblical texts. Near the end

the chaplain remarks that Kuiper has "overstepped the boundaries of free interpretation of the Scriptures set for every member of the church. In the name of the synod of the Reformed Church of the Netherlands, I must charge you to cease your endeavors." As far as he was concerned, Kuiper should "leave them [Jews] to God. You have done too much already."

Instead of signing a statement that the chaplain has prepared, Kuiper rips it up. Unlike the Dutch government and the various people who counseled him, Kuiper regarded the Jews as his neighbours for whom he has to care. Although at times he wavered, he staunchly kept his promise to the Jews. Interestingly, the Dutch naval commodore attempted to charge him with insanity, but the ship's doctor won't comply, arguing that Kuiper's strong Calvinist stance may be misguided but that his views are definitely not insane.

## Lame-duck response

The chaplain's charge and attitude raises an important issue. How much did the Dutch churches officially support the Jews? The stories that have appeared in the *Christian Courier* seem to imply that they did, but the official historian of the Dutch holocaust does not seem to agree. J. Presser, professor at the University of Amsterdam, argued in his two-volume work *Ondergang* (1965; English translation *Ashes in the Wind: The De-*

*struction of Dutch Jewry*, 1968) that the official attitude of the churches was rather mixed.

The first protest against discrimination against the Jews came in October 1940, upon Rev. J.J. Buskes' suggestion that the churches read an appeal to Seyss-Inquart, Hitler's Austrian commissioner in the Netherlands. Apparently there was some confusion for the appeal was not read in the Gereformeerde and Christelijke Gereformeerde churches, both



Dutch Jewish children wearing Star of David.

roots of the CRC, and the Lutheran Church. Presser commented that in the light of that moment praise should not be withheld, but in later light it was neither qualitatively nor quantitatively very impressive, especially compared to what individuals did.

The churches spoke out more readily when baptized Jews were involved. When Jewish children were excluded from the schools, Catholics as well as Protestants protested. The archbishop stated that the schools should refuse to exclude Jewish children baptized as Catholics; the Protestant school organizations suddenly became adamant in their refusal to abide by the order. Instead of threatening the schools, the government threatened Jewish parents. As it turned out there were only about two dozen such children in the Protestant schools, several of them of non-Dutch background.

## A bolder approach

The churches started to protest more vehemently when deportations started in 1942. In July of that year ten denominations sent a telegram to the German government protesting against anti-Jewish measures, arguing

*Continued on p. 14*



## Poetry

## Israeli impressions

Linda Siebenga

March 2008 we went to Israel with a group hosted by Pastor Peter Tuininga from Covenant CRC in Leduc. We always put the thought of going to Israel out of the way because of the conflict there, but decided that there is conflict there much of the time and people do travel there. We thoroughly enjoyed the trip. It was like returning to the place of our roots. We were familiar with the names of the places and the stories that went with them. We never felt unsafe when we were there.

Our first nights were at an older hotel on the Mt. of Olives. We had a wonderful view of the Old City of Jerusalem across the Kidron Valley. The Garden of Gethsemane was between us and the Old City, Bethany just down the hill to the east of the Mt. of Olives.

The next four nights were in Tiberias, on the edge of the Sea of Galilee and the remainder of the time we returned to a different area of Jerusalem and made bus trips into or outside the city

I am still troubled by the walls around pockets of Palestinian territory in the center of Israel. Knowing this and seeing it were two different things. The Israelis have built and are building walls on Palestinian land to contain the Palestinians. When we travelled to Bethlehem and Jericho, both very near to Jerusalem, we had to enter through a gated-wall. The olive groves outside the wall belong to the Palestinians but they are not able to access them.

## Hotel in Tiberias

He is sitting at a small marble table writing.

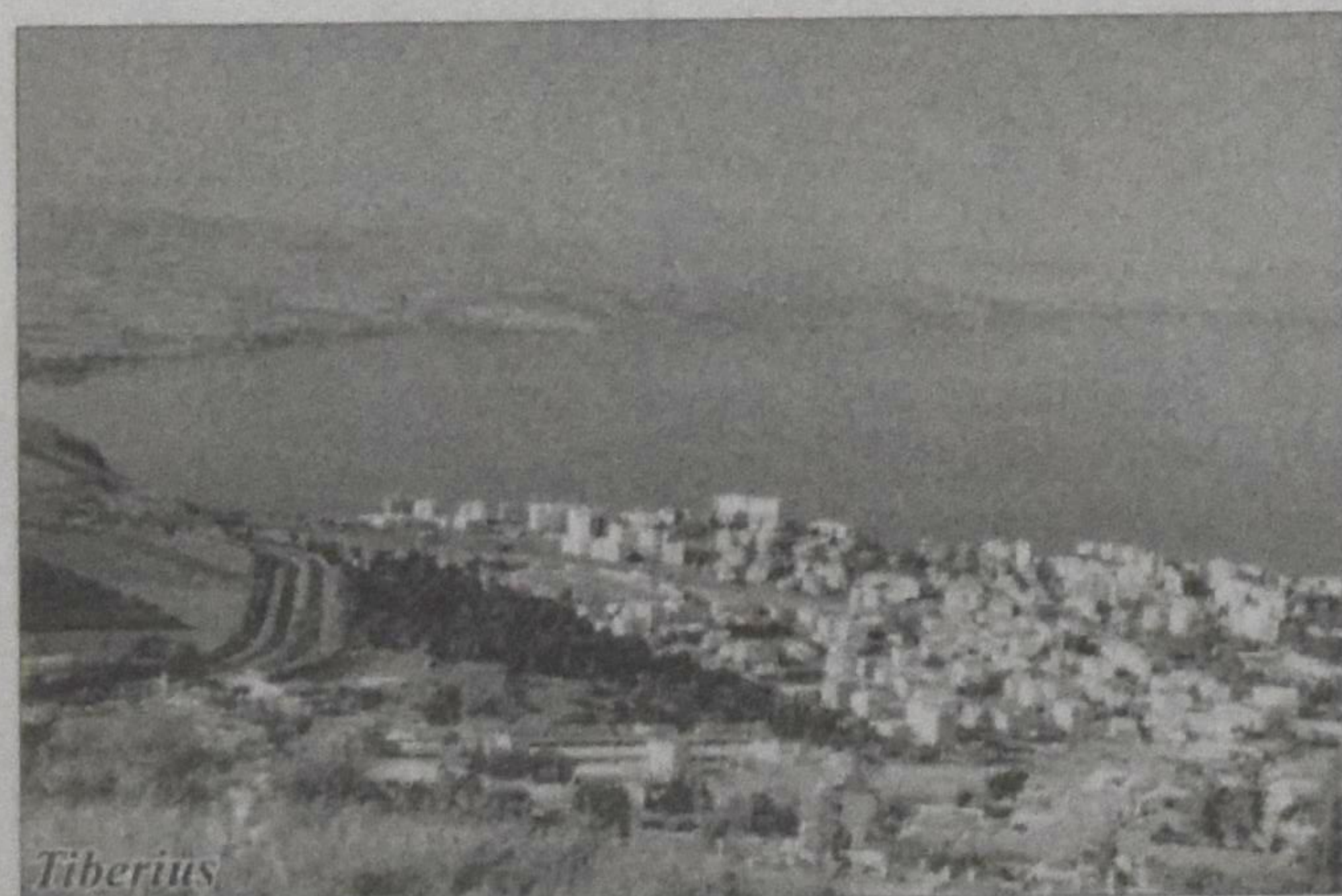
It is evening

and the soft air from the Sea of Galilee creeps through the corner patio door.

The Sea dark and quiet reflects pencils of light at the distant shore.

Tiberias tucked into this valley between sea and hills.

Shabbat quietness.



Tiberias



Birthplace of Jesus

## Bethlehem: the House of Bread

Pita bread with beef and veggies  
A nice light lunch for six dollars  
After arriving in Bethlehem

No incidents at the checkpoint  
A concrete wall separates  
The Palestinian town from the Israelis.

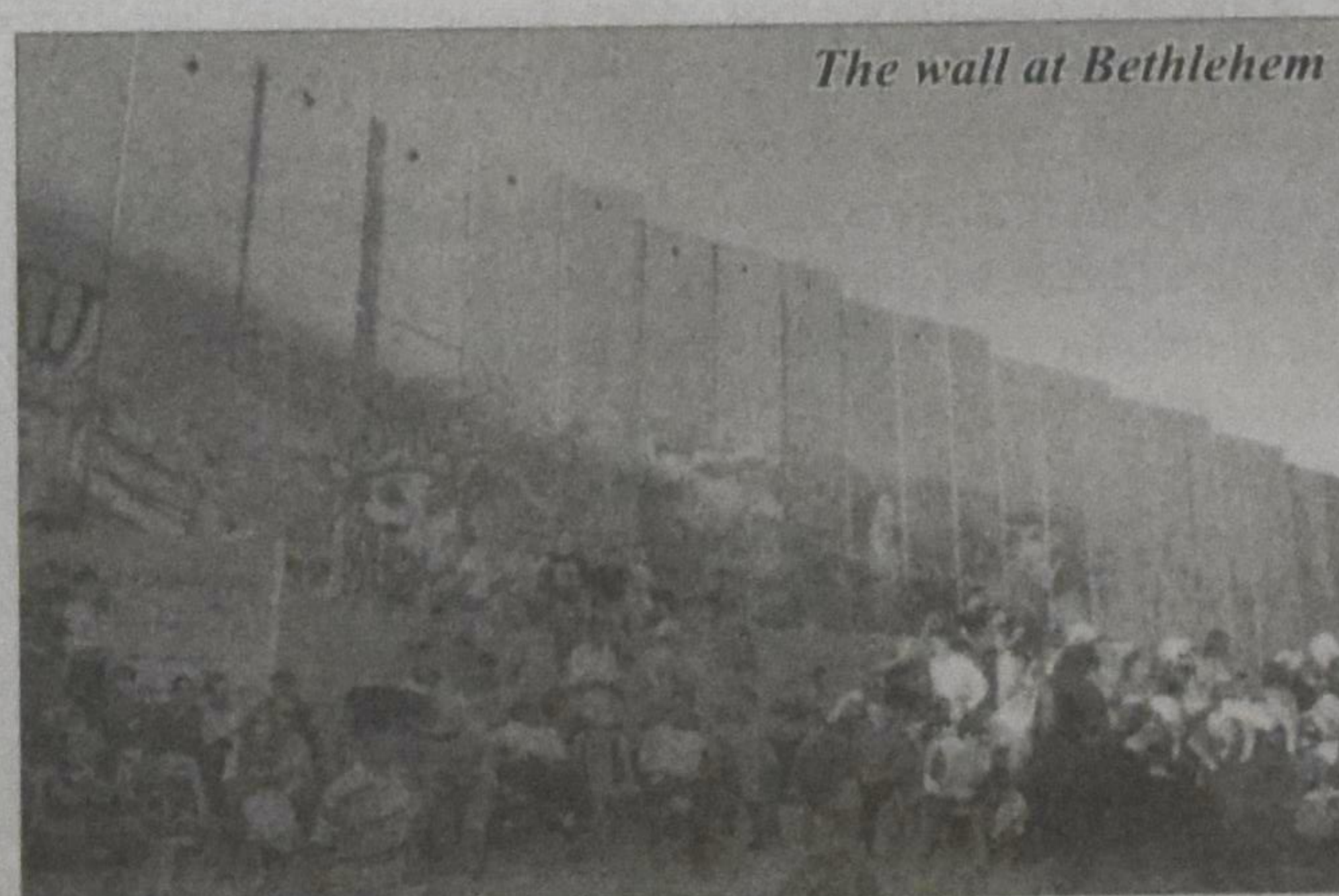
Shop for Olive Wood carvings  
Walk from the bus up the street  
To the Church of the Nativity

Perhaps the birthplace  
Of the Bread of Life  
Always perhaps  
Yet handled like a shrine

A star around a hole in the floor  
The commemorative spot  
Which people wait in line to kiss

Was this where the stable was?  
The heat on that cold night  
Coming from the animals  
Beneath the innkeeper's rooms

Enough to keep Jesus and his  
Parents warmer than the guests above.



The wall at Bethlehem

## Capernaum

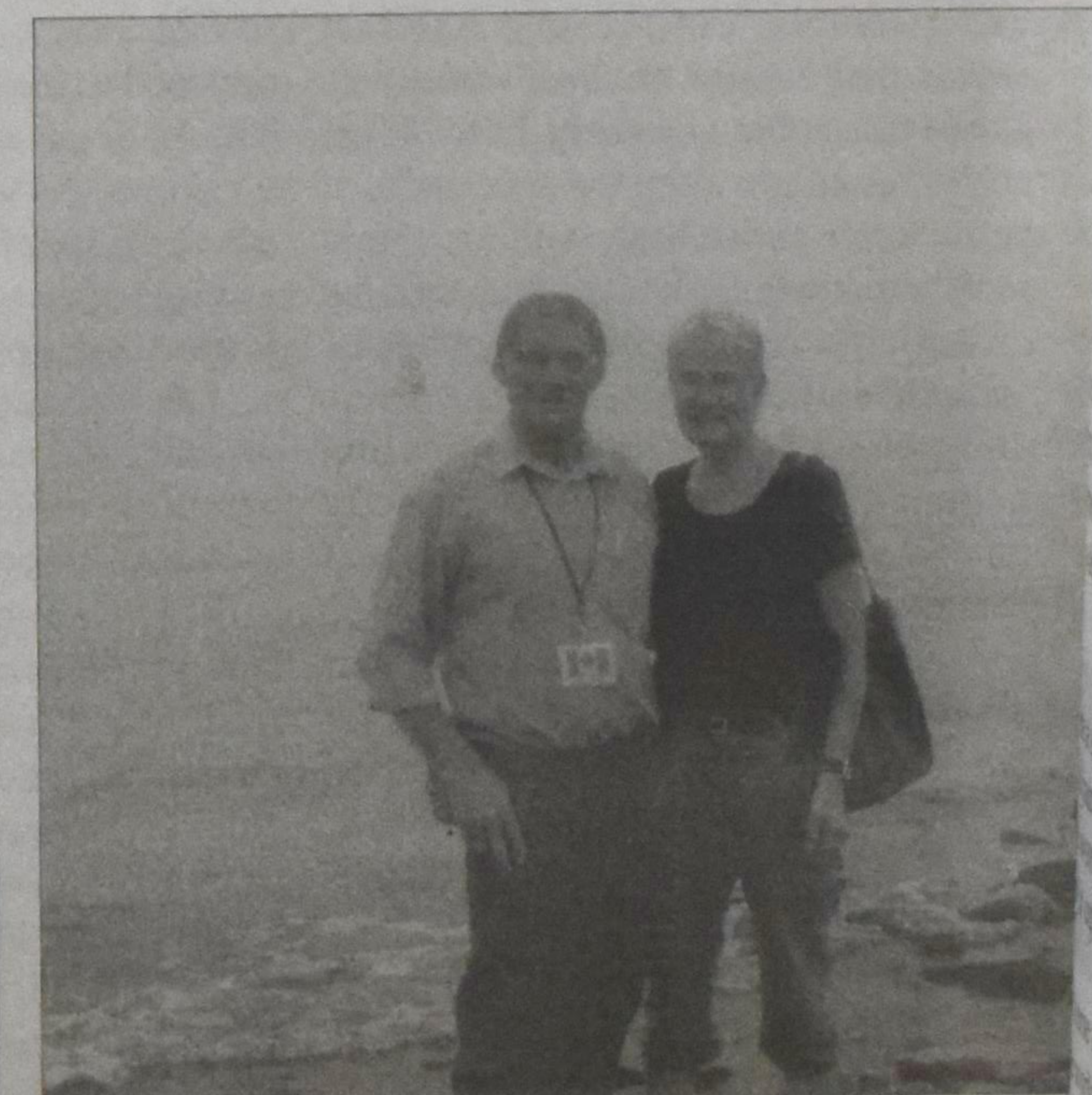
So many stories set in Capernaum  
a fishing village on the Sea of Galilee  
where Jesus sometimes stayed  
at the home of Peter  
healed Peter's mother  
told the centurion  
that his son would be well  
Here he met his first disciples  
all fishermen.

Here the woman touched  
the tassel on his garment.  
This village cursed by Jesus  
along with Bethsaida and Korazin  
for their unbelief.

Even though they had seen  
so many of his miracles  
their faith was less  
than the people  
of Sodom and Gomorrah.  
The area now  
not a village.  
Its black basalt pillars  
monuments of faithlessness.



Capernaum

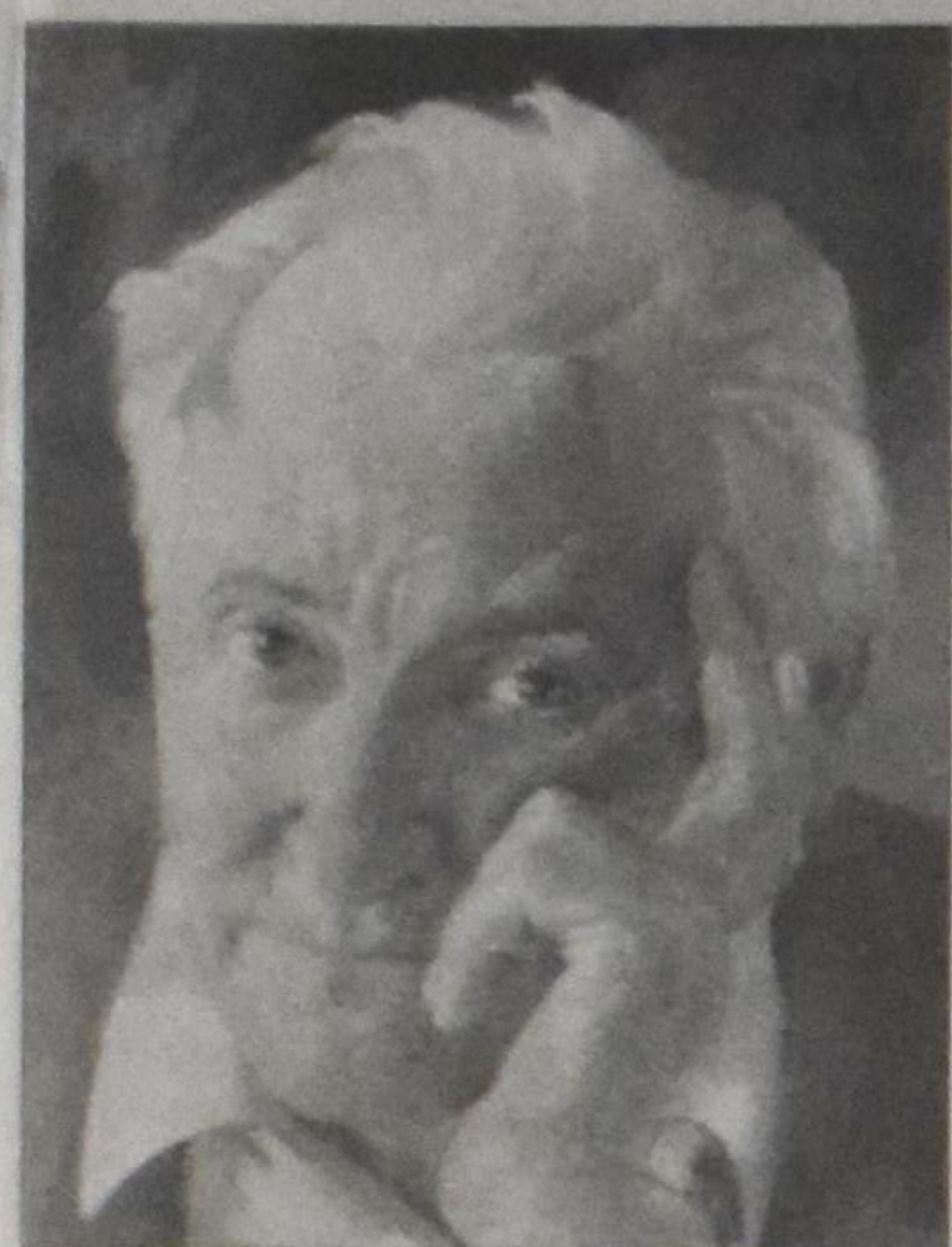


Jack and Linda Siebenga by the Sea of Galilee.



## Poet

## 'There is a land with beauty graced'



Frank Sawyer

Sándor Kányádi was born in Transylvania, Romania, in 1929, in the small village of Nagygámbfa, where his father farmed the land. His secondary education included three years at a Calvinist school in Székelyudvarhely, a year at a Roman Catholic school, and then four years at the Technical College there.

He moved to Kolozsvár (Cluj) in 1950 and remained living there until now. He has received many prizes for his literary work, starting in 1978 with a prize from the Romanian Writers' Union, and later, for example, the Kossuth prize (Budapest, 1990), and the Herder prize (Vienna, 1995). His translation of Rainer Maria Rilke's poems received the honor of "Book of the Year" in 1990, and his own poems were collected in 1997 and published in Budapest under the title, *Somebody Walks atop the Trees* (*Valaki jár a fák hegyén*).

Sándor Kányádi is a Romanian Calvinist poet, who has written in Hungarian on many themes, using various styles and poetic moods. He writes free verse and formal verse, haiku and epigram stanzas. I am following the translations by Peter Zollman, who was very skillful in creating an English translation of these poems. (Peter Zollman, *Sándor Kányádi: There is a Land – selected poems* (Budapest: Corvina, 2000). A close comparison with the original Hungarian poems shows that Zollman has stayed close to Kányádi, while also taking measures of liberty to make the English very captive reading.

Let me introduce the poetry of Sándor Kányádi with a serious poem that acknowledges the power of grace in spite of evil.

there is a land with beauty graced  
landscapes where the bitter taste  
that fouls my mouth is purified  
there is a land deep deep inside  
where words-of-the-field are flowering  
like edelweiss the phrases cling  
for dear life to the mountain cliffs

In this poem and in others, we see that the poet finds the land "beauty graced" by poetry, by love, and by the grace of God.

While Kányádi has written such serious poetry, with provocative political and ethical indications, he also has written light, innocent children's verse, as if he were merely skipping a rope on a sunny day. Yet even in his light verse a deeper moral commitment is echoed. For example:

If I were a shower  
I would rain and rain,  
give the world a good soak  
then dry it up again.

This playful verse for children could also be interpreted to mean that the world needs a good ethical cleansing, indeed religious salvation, and a new holiness. In fact, this is exactly what Kányádi sometimes says in his poetry. The struggle for justice, the struggle for love and hope in the

world, and the great feeling of incomplete redemption, is a major theme in the work of this major Hungarian voice of the second half of the 20th century. At the beginning of the 21st century we will do well to contemplate his thoughts, for the recent war and terrorist events have proven that Kányádi is permanently relevant to the wounds of the world.

**Incomplete redemption**

Though we live in a land with beauty graced, we also live under the influence of fear. This is the human condition, due to suffering and sin – often due to political abuse of power. Kányádi refers to all of this and more. The following poem, written in 1984, is important to understand Kányádi's own poetic-religious quest:

**Failed Meeting with János Pilinszky**

one day I nearly managed to reach you  
like a trapeze artist climbing to the top  
I got hold of the dangling girdle rope of a line  
of your hairshirt-poetry but you were  
absorbed in the messy finishing operations  
of the redemption still dragging on  
some two thousand years after the event  
so with respect and understanding  
eyes cast modestly to the ground  
I climbed back down into the arena

While this refers to Pilinszky, whose poems are very familiar to Hungarians, it also says a lot about Kányádi. For he not only has a great respect for Pilinszky's struggle with the fact of incomplete redemption, but he himself often voices the same problem. Obviously, everyone is aware of the problems of pain and suffering, injustice and oppression. But some are more aware than others, either because they suffer themselves, or because they suffer vicariously, that is out of empathy. But though anyone might mention the problems, not everyone sees these within a view of "incomplete redemption." For some poets, for example, the word and the idea of "redemption" does not enter into their vocabulary. Kányádi speaks of the hope of redemption. He can do that while pointing out both aspects: redemption and its incompleteness.

Theologically speaking, it is nearly always a mistake to think we have found heaven on earth. But to find God among us, as the One in whom we live and move and have our being – as the Apostle Paul said, quoting the Stoics – is of course the message of the Good News. Eventually we "fly away," but in the meantime we already experience God's presence: "there is a land with beauty graced."

**Fear and grace**

Let us now listen to a key poem, written in 1994, which also gave the title to his collected poetry in Hungarian.

**Somebody Walks Atop the Trees**

somebody walks atop the trees  
who lights your star and makes it fade  
those do not fear their destinies  
whom hope has finally betrayed

my fears my hopes don't disappear  
this is the grace that helps me stay  
this caring providential fear  
has held my hand along the way

somebody walks atop the trees  
when I must tumble one fine night  
will he then kindle one of his  
new stars with my departing light

or will he crush me to a grain  
a dark abandoned piece of grit  
and never light my soul again  
when infant stars are newly lit

somebody walks atop the trees  
he cares for every crumb it's said  
it's said he is the hope we breathe  
it's said he is the fear we dread

The 'fear of God' is a biblical expression, which in the past was used more than it is today in modern/postmodern society, though the expression is still used and recognized by many people. The fear of God is not something negative: it is rather respect for God's law and God's will.

Kányádi captures very well the biblical unity of hope and fear. The fear of God includes receiving grace from God.

In the first stanza we learn that God is sovereign. God is in control, for it is divine influence which walks atop the trees, that gives us birth and death: "lights your star and makes it fade." The second two lines of stanza one are a paradox: "those do not fear their destinies/whom hope has finally betrayed." The reader (listener) might think this means hopelessness. Yet the next two lines maintain the paradox of faith: "my fears my hopes don't disappear/ this is the grace that helps me stay." That this is indeed a paradox of faith is then said clearly at the heart of the poem: "this caring providential fear/has held my hand along the way." After this the rest of the poem adds nothing essentially new, but certainly deepens the feelings about this paradox, both the fear and the hope. Let us end with the last two stanzas from a poem called *Epilogue*, written in 1992, in which the poet says:

churches bridges factories houses  
their bombs devastate what they have built  
races languages kill each other  
there's not a trace of loving kindness  
humility or a sense of guilt

when they praise you and say their prayers  
they want your help for tomorrow's crime  
remember lord your shining glory:  
the flowers and beasts of your creation  
grant them your grace to the end of time

Kányádi's poetry is often a prayer, *Kyrie eleison* – Lord have mercy: let there be a land with beauty graced. At the same time, his poetry is a searching for understanding informed by faith. Faith does not clarify everything, but neither does reason. An understanding based on faith does give us hope. In that way Kányádi can look at the world in all its contradictory hopes and terrible failures, and say: "there's hope as long as one dewdrop remains."

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## Corinthians

## Being prepared to die

*I die every day - I mean that, brothers - just as surely as I glory over you in Christ Jesus our Lord. 1 Cor. 15 : 31*

A. A. Van Ruler\*

Even in this text, Paul is pointing out that the message of resurrection is entirely obvious in the preaching of a living God and that all is perfect vanity if there is no resurrection.

In the context of the verse quoted above, he reasons that he himself, as an apostle, is not only in mortal danger every hour for that very reason, but also that he accepts that. Now this would have no meaning if there were no resurrection. One would, in that case of no resurrection, rather focus on saving one's life, stay away from kicking the bucket, and avoid any danger that his kind of life would entail. But Paul does not do that. He enters into the future without any reserve and walks through any and all minefields that have been laid there. To put it crassly, he dies every day, he dwells permanently in the presence of death. He lives life to its extreme frontier.

But that does not mean he lives in a vacuum. On the contrary, that's how he fulfills his apostolic calling. The living God has a plan for this world. He wants to bring his salvation to all nations and thus he sends out his apostles. And so Paul goes on while putting his own person and even his life on the line, bringing the gospel from nation to nation and from land to land.

In Christ, the Corinthians are his glory. In them he perceives the results of his apostolic work, a labour that has not been in vain. But equally sure is the fact that this work goes through a thousand deaths. *I die every day ... just as surely as I glory over you in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

### No need to be anxious

The first thing that is pretty clear from the text is the truth that, based on the gospel of Easter, a person can completely devote himself to the task of doing God's work on earth. No longer does one need to focus on self. It is no longer necessary to protect and save as much as possible from destruction. No longer do we need frantically to hold out against the certain onslaught of death, meanwhile living in constant dread of it. These flashes of fear and doubt are the characteristics of a life being lived without the certainty of the resurrection. Deep down, without the assurance of the resurrection, one's only concern and fear is for bodily survival.

However, those things change radically when one becomes acquainted with the living God, who holds one's life



*Paul's nephew is warning Paul and the commander in prison of a plot against Paul.*

in his hands and who wants to do something with it. He can kill it, for example, and he can also raise it from the dead. This assurance of resurrection is liberating. It sets the person free from herself and also from her fear of death – and those two just might be the same thing. It brings to our life a radical and holy *carelessness*, maybe even a spiritual *recklessness*. It liberates us to hear the call, to have a task, to see life as service, and to devote ourselves to that calling without reservation. When God has shoved to the side the problem of death, then one can no longer harbour sombre thoughts in the back of one's mind.

### Lingering doubts

I think all of us need this liberating thought *daily*. From time to time we tend to think *Why do I actually bother? Life is short and pretty soon it's finished*. Now that's a paralyzing thought, and it seems to make everything hollow until we are quite empty. But the gospel responds and says, "Yes, that may well be the case, but consider then what God has done in Jesus Christ, in his cross and resurrection. By pulling life radically *through* death he has given it an eternal meaning." The spiritual paralysis from which we suffer is cured, radically cured in us by the assurance of Easter.

This radical cure causes us not only to be ready for life and our task in it, but even to be prepared to risk our life

continually. Though the gospel calls us all to that kind of living, I think that this does not simply happen overnight. Most of us would stop short of this extreme consequence at the last moment. There are still people today who so completely devote themselves to their task in life that they do not shrink back from the risk of, for example, dangerous radiation or contamination or other possibilities of death. Such were the martyrs. There is always something there of apostolic authority, of supreme subjection of fear, a life that is solely lived in love.

### Death is a beginning

However, the gospel of life can so penetrate into our hearts that we are set free from our fear of death even in an immediate sense. Not only is the paralysis gone completely, but we can then also stare death in the face and tolerate its presence. We can even go so far as to say that the order is reversed. Quite naturally, life is first

and then death. But the gospel causes us to think of death as being at the beginning. Death is *behind* us because that death is Jesus' death. And in that death God has judged everything. We also learn to give ourselves and our all in that death. With everything that is ours we are baptized in Christ's death. When that has happened – and still happens – then there is only one thing left to know and that is the resurrection and new life. "Behold, the old has gone; the new has come." In our *way of life* we have left death behind. That is why we can risk life so completely.

Let us remember then that this is a unique character trait of our life in the resurrection: *That we risk it continually*. There is great depth in that life. Eternal life, such as we live it today in the resurrection, is not peaches and cream. It cuts a way right through the valley of the shadow of death.

God goes with us continuously on that way and that is necessary. We are the ones who are being saved and made into God's children. Our earthly and temporary life is being saved and transformed into eternal life. However, we do not take ourselves and our own lives ever again in our own hands. We must surrender ourselves and all we have into God's own hands. Now when that happens, you will find the resurrection and the life. And that is death at the same time: We let go of ourselves and we die every day.

*\*Translated by Bram Hoff, St. Catharines*

## Dutch Christians, Jews and World War II ... continued from p. 11

that these went against the deepest moral principles of the Dutch people and against God's demand of justice and mercy. The telegram ended with a special appeal for Christian Jews, who could now not participate in the life of the churches. The occupying government used the last sentence as a means to divide and rule, even differentiating between Catholics and Protestants. Only briefly baptized Christians were exempted, as long as they were baptized before 1941, but soon they, too, were deported. In the meantime the government was able to convince the Reformed Church not to read the telegram from the pulpits, although it was read in Catholic churches and, inadvertently, in some other Calvinist churches.

When in 1943 the government suggested the sterilization of Jews the churches unanimously protested against this violation against God's commandments and human rights. "It was," they protested, "the utmost consequence of an anti-Christian and people-annihilating racial teaching, of a world-and-life view that makes a truly Christian and human life impossible." It may have been the churches' strongest protest.

### Partial justice

Yet the ambiguous attitude of the churches continued, notably when signs indicating that Jews were forbidden to enter their buildings appeared. Catholic bishops forbade the signs when they excluded Catholic Jews; the Reformed Church protested against signs appearing on churches but was not so sure when they appeared elsewhere, although individual pastors were much firmer, one of them placing a sign that read: "All races welcome."

Presser concluded that the churches began hesitantly, often abiding by the occupiers' measures. They often stood up first of all for baptized Jews who were persecuted rather than for persecuted Jews in general. One could say that as a Jew, Presser was biased in his views, but he quoted enough Christian authors to lend legitimacy to his conclusion. It should be kept in mind that his mixed reaction concerned the organizational institutions, not the individuals.

### Daring escape

Back to Kuiper. His comments to the naval chaplain ap-

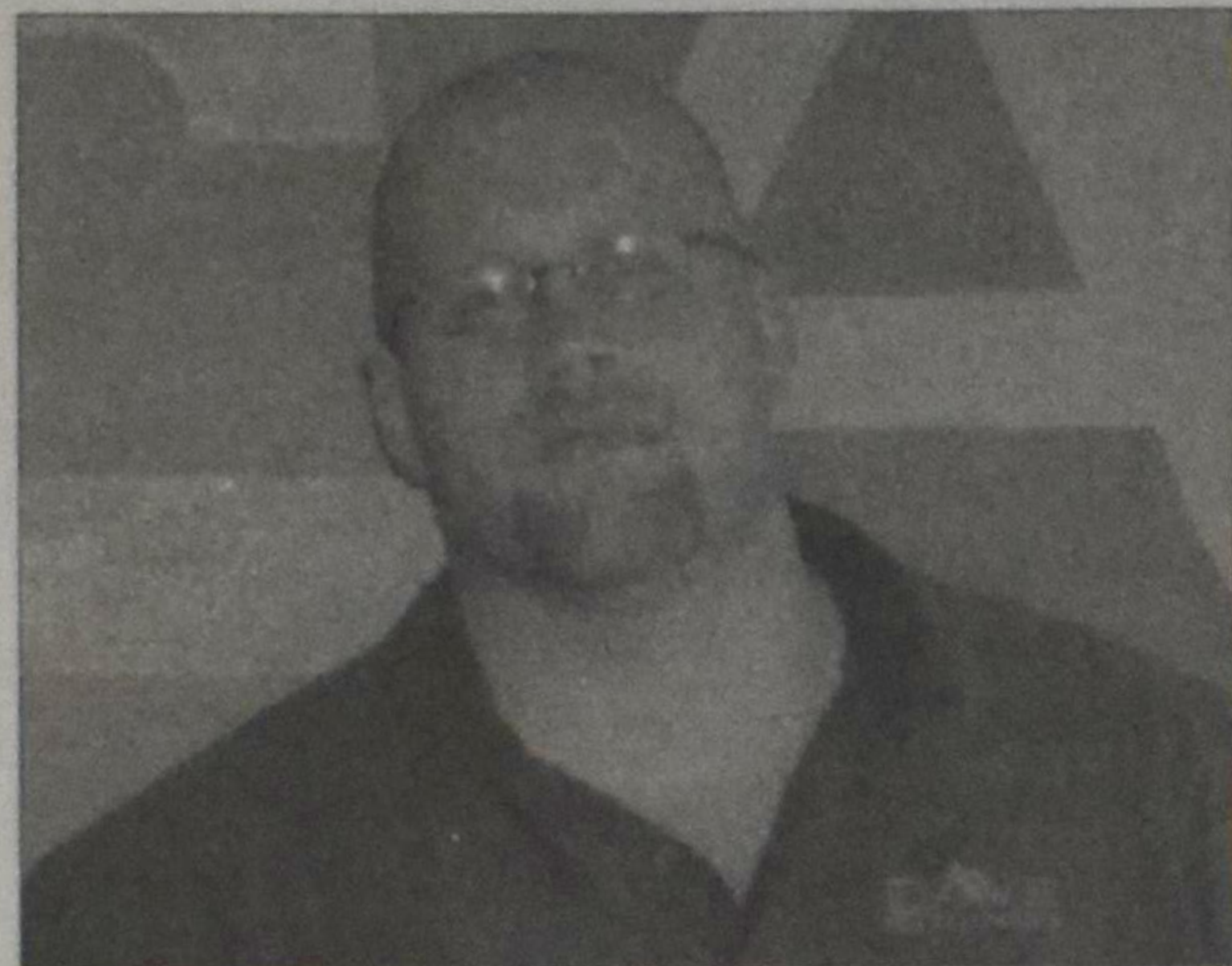
pear justified against that hesitant beginning of the churches. Unlike the captain of the *St. Louis* he did not take his passengers back to Germany. From the US coastguard he heard – unofficially – that there would be a regatta of sailboats. In compliance with Luke 14:26, which deals with the cost of discipleship and hating even one's own life, Kuiper decided to sink his ship. The earlier preparations for landing would be put to the test. His passengers as well as the crew and he himself got off the ship before it exploded. All except a volunteer nurse were rescued by the participants of the regatta. Although the media announced the event, it was overshadowed by the big event of the invasion of Poland. World War II had begun. While the Jews were allowed to stay in the United States, Kuiper was returned to the Netherlands as a prisoner.

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## Issues

# Freedom of religion assaulted: who would have thought?



Calgary youth pastor Stephen Boissin, facing an Alberta Human Rights Commission complaint for publishing a letter to the editor critical of "the gay agenda."

## Harry Antonides

It is difficult to imagine a guaranteed right more important to a democratic society than freedom of expression.... The concept of free and uninhibited speech permeates all truly democratic societies and institutions. (Supreme Court of Canada, *Edmonton Journal v. Alberta*, 1989)

If the courts uphold what the AHRCC did to Rev. Boissin, religious liberty will be mortally wounded in Canada. (Raymond J. de Souza, "When did the Bible Become Hate Speech?" *National Post*, June 12, 2008)

The case of former pastor Stephen Boissin before the Alberta Human Rights and Citizenship Commission (AHRCC) deserves the undivided attention of every Canadian citizen who thinks that freedom of speech and religion is fundamental to a truly free society.

That certainly used to be taken for granted, as stated in the *Canadian Bill of Rights* and the 1982 *Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, which in section 2(b) states that everyone enjoys "freedom of thought, belief, opinion, and expression, including freedom of the press and other media of expression."

## Big Brother is watching

That is plain enough, but due to a sea change in ideas among the shapers of public opinion, these words no longer mean what they used to mean. To make a long story short, the common law idea of the limited state and a free society has made way for the interventionist state. This radical transformation means that the state is now deeply involved in all areas of society, a process directed by an ever-growing army of state-appointed overseers and enforcers.

This is how Stephen Boissin ended up before the Alberta Human Rights Commission after publishing a letter in the *Red Deer Advocate* back in June of 2002. His letter under the heading "Homosexual Agenda Wicked" was blunt and lacked all niceness and nuance. It included statements as follows:

*Our children are being victimized by repugnant and premeditated strategies, aimed at desensitizing and eventually recruiting our*

*young into their camps. Think about it, children as young as five and six years of age are being subjected to psychologically and physiologically damaging pro-homosexual literature and guidance in the public school system: all under the fraudulent guise of equal rights.*

## Charge of discrimination

The following month, Dr. Darren E. Lund, a professor at the University of Calgary, filed a complaint at the Alberta Human Rights Commission alleging that the Boissin letter amounted to discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation contrary to section 3 of the *Human Rights, Citizenship and Multiculturalism Act*.

This section among other things, forbids the publishing of anything that discriminates against a person or a class of persons, or that is "likely to expose a person or a class of persons to hatred or contempt because of race, religious beliefs, color, gender," etc.

Section 3(2) also states: "Nothing in this Section shall be deemed to interfere with the free expression of opinion on any subject."

Initially, the complaint was



Dr. Darren E. Lund

dismissed on a technicality, but in May 2005, the complaint was allowed to proceed to the panel hearing stage. Subsequent hearings led to a decision by panel chair Lori G. Andreachuk, published on November 30, 2007.

The *Red Deer Advocate* was not a party to this case because it had, as a result of a previous human rights complaint, meekly bowed out of this fight by changing its publication policy to follow the letter of the law. The Concerned Christian Coalition Inc. did the same thing and issued an apology for having published Boissin's letter.

Lund requested that Boissin be ordered to pay him \$5000 as compensation, a further \$5000 to the *Diversity, Equity and Human Rights Committee* of the Alberta Teachers' Association; that he be ordered to publish a full apology in the *Red Deer Advocate* for his letter, which must include the statement that he understands that what he wrote was "inappropriate and likely to expose persons or groups of persons to hatred or contempt." If Boissin fails to comply with the order, Lund requested that the panel forbid Boissin to publish his views on homosexuality in the major print media in Alberta.

Lund argued that Boissin's letter was an abuse of free speech, that its language was militaristic and extremist, demonized and dehumanized individual homosexuals, was factually wrong, incited hatred and contempt, and "perhaps even violence against an identifiable group."

## A surprise intervener

Douglas R. Jones, employed with the United Way who previously had served in the Diversity Resources Unit of the Calgary City Police, provided testimony in support of Lund's complaint. He stated that his experience had led him to believe "that gays are routinely targeted for hate and discrimination in Alberta." His concern with Boissin's letter was that it encouraged violence against homosexuals.

Dr. Kevin Alderson, a licensed psychologist, was the expert witness who agreed that the Boissin letter is a form of hate speech that is likely to expose gay persons to more hatred and contempt. He reported that sexual minorities are among the most frequently targeted victims of hate-

motivated violence in Canada.

If you thought that the Conservative Alberta government would come down on the side of freedom of speech, you would be in for a rude surprise. The Attorney General intervened via legal counsel to argue, first, issues of jurisdiction, and then the merit of the complaint itself.

The Attorney General is of the opinion that the Boissin letter cannot be defended on the basis that it is a political expression, but whether or not it is discriminatory. He takes the position that it is discriminatory if it is likely to cause others to engage in prohibited practices. Yet, "no link to actual discriminatory acts need be established in this regard." (emphasis added)

The Attorney General submits that the testimony presented to this panel by Douglas Jones and Kevin Alderson has established that Boissin's letter has the effect of enhancing discrimination against homosexuals, adds to the perception of gay people as being inherently evil, and condones the mistreatment of gay people. He states that the *Alberta Human Rights Act* "does not endorse the right of religious groups to engage in discriminatory expression."

## No hurt feelings protection

The Canadian Civil Liberties Association intervened with a strong defence of freedom of expression. Though it "vehemently" disagrees with Boissin's views, it is equally vehement that he has the right to express his opinions without fear of legal reprisal. The Association takes this position because it defends "the fundamental rights to freedom of expression, of conscience and of religion."

The CCLA told the panel that though letters to the editors may be "reprehensible or unpalatable," they perform a vital function of stimulating debate and the exchange of ideas. It found that the lively public debate in *Red Deer* sparked by Boissin's letter is "a sign of a healthy and functioning democracy."

The CCLA warned that suppressing such speech would have a major chilling effect on public debate for participants may fear to "misspeak or be punished for expressing an unpopular opinion." It reminded the panel that human rights legislation is not intended "to remedy or protect

against hurt feelings."

Barry Cooper, political science professor, also presented a strong defence of freedom of expression and warned against the state's stifling of open and vigorous debate. He is convinced that the right to free speech is the right to debate not to ensure agreement. He thinks that Lund wants to silence Boissin by accusing him of inciting hatred rather than engaging in further debate.

## The Verdict

The chair of the panel, Lori G. Andreachuk, sided with the complainant and the expert witnesses Kevin Alderson and Douglas R. Jones, and others who spoke in support of the complainant. With that she accepted as proven what are in fact highly debatable controversies.

Indeed, there are respectable, even compelling contrary positions about this matter, backed by careful analysis and by the testimony of homosexuals themselves. There is a wealth of such material readily available, especially with respect to questions of physical, emotional and mental health issues. To mention just one outstanding source: *Homosexuality and the Politics of Truth*, by Jeffrey Satinover, who has practiced psychoanalysis and psychiatry and taught at Yale and Harvard (Baker Books, 1996).

Further, no less problematic is Andreachuk's ignoring the long and torturous history of common law that sets a hedge around that which is, or should be, outside the direct control of the state. Of course, the state needs to protect us against language that is libelous, treasonous and advocating criminal acts. That's a different subject.

The panel chair carelessly dismissed the arguments of Barry Cooper, and even of the CCLA, which although it "vehemently" disagreed with Boissin's opinions, nevertheless strongly upheld his right to express them. Such a position from an organization that specializes in these matters should carry a lot of weight. But it does not, because Andreachuk is driven by a different ideology.

She declares it nonsensical to enact human rights legislation only to have that overridden by the freedom of speech defence. Accordingly, she ruled that Boissin was not engaged in political speech but in moral criticism of homosexuality.

Continued on p. 19



## Nature

Flowers &amp; Thistles

Curt Gesch



# Bear poo paradise

If Leonard Lee Rue III's neighbour could count deer hairs per square inch, and my students at school counted the seeds and plants produced by wheat and canola (See November 10 issue), I figured it was time to take my own recommendation and find something to count. (Something more than the *one* turnip I pulled from the ground with an excavator.)

My mind, a fertile sort of thing, settled on bear manure. While Chester, the Wonder Dog, slept in the garage one night, a black bear decided to knock over the fence post supporting our suet feeder in the side yard (about six feet from the window) and then strolled through the front yard, leaving a deposit as an expression of neighborliness (or disdain).

The deposit was – shall we say – quite large. I could easily count it: *one pile*. But my mind wandered. First, I was reminded of the biologist in *The God's Must Be Crazy* who studied elephant poo and still “got the pretty girl.” I already have my girl, and I think it would take more than weighing bear poo on the kitchen scales to lose her.

Then I thought about multiplication. What if I figured out the weight of the bear poo deposited in our field by the two bears that spent most of the daylight hours gleaning and grazing in our backyard field (barley regrowth after silage harvest)? Although I'm not teaching multiplication this year, I could see the attraction of a multiplication “problem” for students in Math 5 or 6. (That girl I got says my psychological development has stopped about the grade 5 or 6 level, which explains my success with the students and the occasional dismay of their parents.)

Once I realised that contemplating bear poo could be a mathematical exercise, a scientific exercise, and might even lead to a starring role in *The Gods Must Be Crazy – Canada*, other avenues of activity came to mind.

I could walk the entire 30 acres and count the piles of bear poo already deposited. I could check the Internet and see if there are any statistics for numbers of black bear defecations per day. I could calculate the fertilising value or the total mass of poo. (At this point, the nagging voice, “You have too much time on your hands,” made itself heard, but by a superhuman act of will I resisted its invitation to cease my study.)

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Meanwhile, about 100 metres behind the garden, the large black bear was grazing. A little further back, the smaller bear was sitting on its growing backside and gazing at . . . grass, I guess. Ursine imagination must be involve more complex things than grass-gazing, but I had no way to interview Small Bear – for thus I creatively



named her – without a certain apprehension.

Chester the Wonder Dog has no such apprehension. I say, “Where’s the bear?” and he races out to the field to chase them away. When he gets very close, maybe 15 metres or so – he has been heard, smelled, or spotted by Big or Small Bear. The bears then run to the edge of the field and stop. Chester usually stops, too.

Chester returns home. After about ten minutes Big and Small return to the field at a slightly greater distance from the fearsome Wonder Dog. This has been going on for over a month as I write this (October 22).

I began to try to figure out a way to make a geometry “problem” out of the Chester’s defensive zone coverage. I could measure a radius, and then. . .

Then. . . I realised that I had been living in some sort of Peaceable Kingdom for the last month. Every day we watch the bears, the bears watch us. The dog chases them. They run, and return. I suspect that it’s a bit of a game for both Chester and Big and Small. Chester, at least, usually wags his tail when he stops to give the occasional bark as he nears the bears. He doesn’t growl and his hackles don’t stand up.

I don’t live in Coquitlam, B.C., where people are jumped by black bears looking for supper. I don’t live in a built-up area where shooting a problem animal is impossible and well-meaning folk think that killing bears is murder. So far, anyway, we haven’t had to deal with aggressive grizzlies, although our neighbours on Wakefield Road – maybe three miles by air – have had to.

Not for more than ten years have “our” bears – several generations of them – invaded our chicken coop to steal a bag of 17 percent laying ration (before that one of them dragged the bag across the field, leaving a nice trail of pellets behind). Not for more than ten years have “our” bears invaded our other chicken coop, killing chickens and refusing to leave. (Play “The Last Post” here.)

Not for a long time have we had bear problems. We have bear neighbours, but not bear enemies. This may change, but for now, we enjoy living *with* bears, even if we don’t wish to lie down with them (Isaiah 11:7).

\*\*\*\*\*

I suppose C.S. Lewis would call my sudden vision of the Peaceable Kingdom one of

those “shafts of glory,” and he would go on to write a learned essay about it.

But my mind returns to dung. Bear dung. Poo. I walk through the field to see just how many of these mega-dumps are still lying there. I quit at thirteen.

I do check the Internet and find only two articles that mention the frequency of bear defecation. One says that grizzlies defecate seventeen times per day! Another, charting European brown bears, shows much lower rates. I suggest a conservative number: 12 deposits per day, six of which hit the barley field. Here’s the math:

- \* 2 kilogram per defecation
- \* 12 defecations per day, but only 6 land on our field
- \* 30 days of grazing

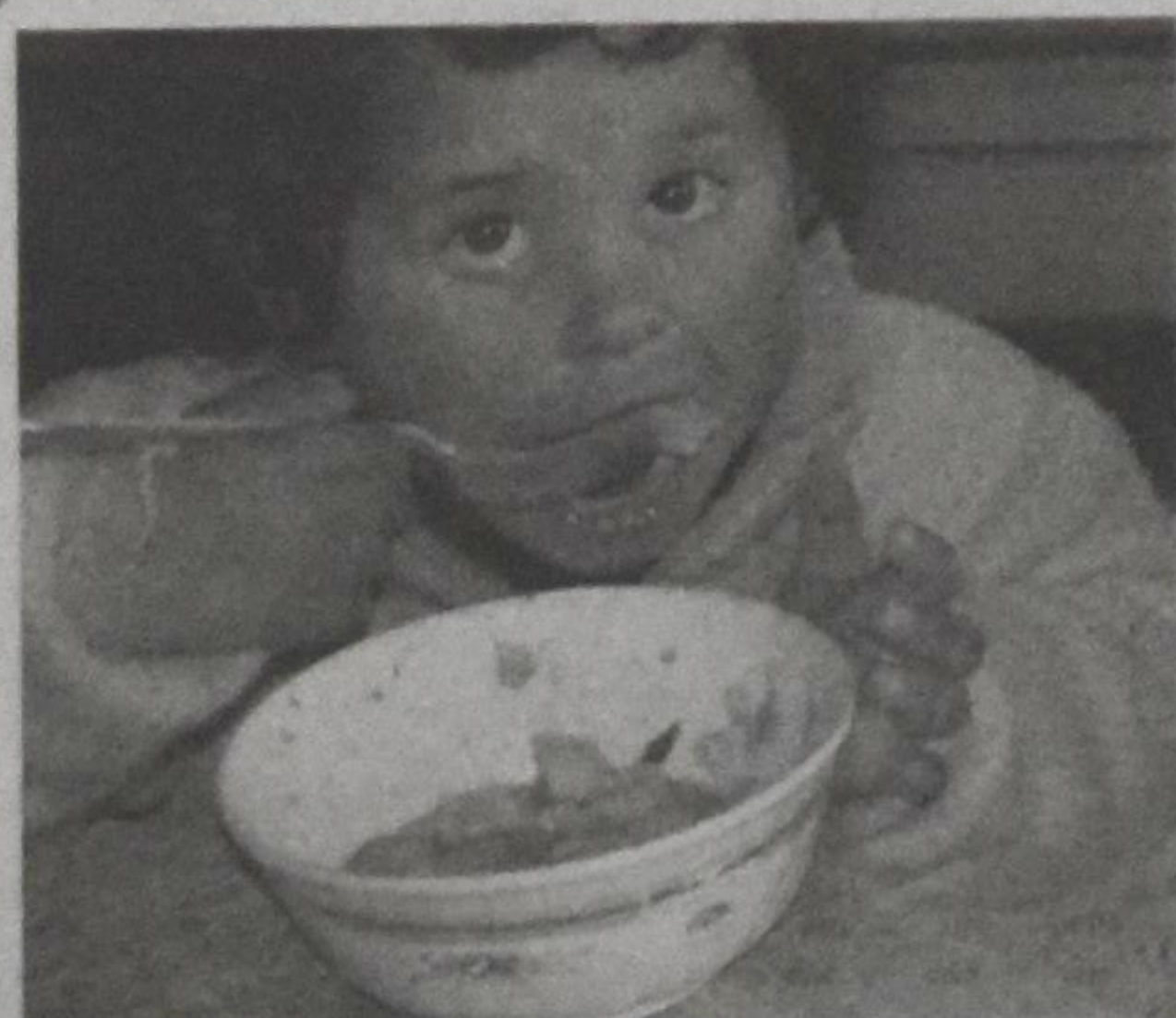
$2 \times 6 \times 30 = 360$  kg. In other words, 360 kilograms of bear poo have been deposited on our barley field during the past month. With fertilizer selling at ridiculously high prices, there must actually be some *profit* in having Big and Small out there. But even without any fertilizer value, Big and Small are valuable: With a digestive system that is only about 26 percent efficient – I read that somewhere – Big and Small are walking compost piles, bruin humus factories.

I started thinking of whether I could justify raising the land rental fee on the basis of having “our” bears providing soil conditioners.



Just then, however, my friend Steffen came over to check out the root cellar. When he saw the bears, he said, “Curt, we live in *Paradise*.”

I said, “Amen” to that and promptly stepped in a pile.



Watch for ...  
**Gift Giving Guide**  
inserted in this issue.

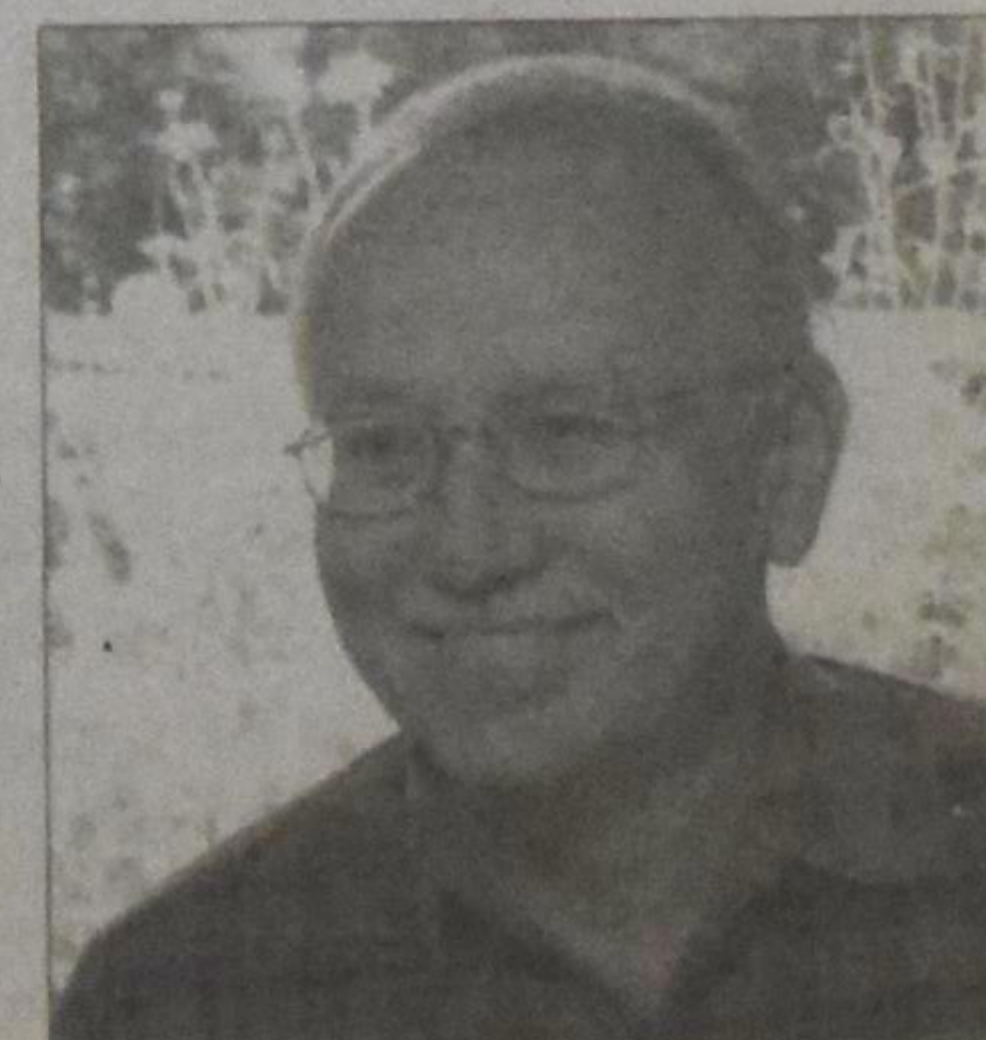
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Rev. Brian Lise ~ Director  
1-866-630-6301

Blessed is he,  
who is kind  
to the needy

Prov 14 21b

Curt Gesch is teaching part-time in Houston, B.C. He helps the children learn about wheat, grouse, canola, carrots, and bear poo.





## Reflections



Marian Van Til

I'm up early on a Monday morning on our first day of vacation in the Berkshire mountains of Massachusetts. I don't mind. I'm sitting at the kitchen table of our condo-for-the-week facing a brown-blue mountain wrapped in patches of fog. Below, and in the foreground, I can see the tops of five tall pines. To the left rises the silhouette of a naked deciduous tree, beyond the white railing of our balcony. I'm listening to a Mozart violin and piano sonata courtesy of my laptop. We brought classical music CDs from home, as we always do when we travel, but there is no CD player here. It suddenly occurred to me a while ago that my computer could be a stand-in (despite having no Internet access from our unit). The sound quality isn't great, but the music itself certainly is.

It's a gray day, but I'm delighted with the day, the view and the music, and with the fact that we are able to be here, in a different world so (relatively) close to home for a week of rest and rejuvenation, we pray.

And a week of ignoring political news for the first time in a long time!

### Can't ignore historic election

When I first began this month's column it was two days after the historic election which has made Barack Obama the President-elect of the United States of America. I can't simply let it pass, even though I don't normally talk about things political in this column.

However, important as the election result is as a milestone for black Americans, Obama's election no longer seems quite as earth-shaking to me as it did on November 5. Time – the passage thereof – has a way of making us mortals whose lives (since the Fall) are time-bound see events large or small, national or personal, in new perspectives. Or at least it should.

I am neither a Democrat nor a Republican, but an "independent voter." I am also among the approximately 47 per cent of Americans who (apart from rejoicing in the racial milestone passed) are not intoxicated by the knowledge that Barack Obama is our President-elect, and who feel that, despite that racial milestone, the time to come may not be one of healing. I'm one of many Americans – particularly Christian Americans – who is praying that what happens in the passage of time while Mr. Obama is our President is not something we will need to regret, or more importantly, repent of.

I am troubled about what the future may hold under a President Obama. It's my faith that leads me to that apprehension. (That is not to say that I've had no misgivings about President Bush's leadership in the last eight years, but my misgivings there are of a different sort.) Nor do I mean to say that the many biblically oriented Christians who did vote for Obama, some of my relatives and friends among them, were able to do so by disregarding their faith – though I am disturbed that those voters could ignore Obama's consistently and appallingly extreme views and votes on abortion.

### Too much a mystery

Despite the wearily long campaign we still don't know Barack Obama. We know that, though he has immense political talent, his resumé is razor-thin, and his worldview obscure. Our ignorance has been maintained by much of the media, the majority of whose members during the long campaign months could not contain their own glee and personal investment in the possibility of Obama being elected; and they didn't generally try to. That in itself is troubling. It bodes ill for a democratic nation whose press is no longer objective. I mean "objective" in the sense of news

## Submit to government authorities

reporters being willing to sublimate their own opinions, working carefully to present all sides of issues and personalities evenly and fairly so as to equip readers and viewers to come to sound conclusions.

Who is Obama? The worldview evident in his past speeches, writings and action as a state and U.S. senator – which Phil Bom attested to in C.C.'s last issue, as being aligned with those who advocated radical social revolution during Obama's early manhood in the late 1960s and early '70s – doesn't jibe with the mild-mannered, always cool Obama who eloquently (if shallowly) repeated again and again his benign message of "hope" and "change."

Obama has confessed that Christ is his Savior (though he has said he doesn't see Christ as the only means to salvation). As a Reformed Christian I'd like to assume that a politician who confesses to being a Christian himself will show evidence that his faith informs his own attitudes and life and views of public justice.

Obama's message of change, however vague, is a call to nothing less than metanoia, to "conversion," a call tailored for the secular masses, in the U.S. and across the world. We don't yet know what the depths of that change may be, but we're being called on to work out our own salvation under Obama's guidance: "Yes, we can"! I am skeptical about to what degree that call is evidence of Christian faith. It sounds much more like good old American self-reliance.

### Cult of personality

Obama is deeply inspiring to his followers; but the enthusiasm has bordered on idolatry. A *Newsweek* journalist being interviewed by Charlie Rose recently on public television admitted that while watching Obama's election-night victory speech he felt there is "something slightly creepy about the cult of personality" that Obama has encouraged to grow up around himself, and that Obama is extraordinarily manipulative. That from an Obama supporter.

I was taken aback. Not so much because it was said by a pro-Obama journalist but because his words were exactly those I had said to myself to describe my own conclusions that night. I realize that feelings are not necessarily reliable predictors of the true state of the world or even of our own corner of it. But feelings can work together with intellect and a biblical awareness of our true human nature to act as warnings. In my view, that hasn't happened in nearly enough people in regards to Obama. He was elected primarily on the basis of largely unexamined feelings that arose out of the hopes of many that his promise of change (vaguely described, at best) will bring a new day in the U.S. and even the world. If it actually does, it will be by the grace and mercy of God, not the messianic qualities of Barack Obama.

Obama, joked about as "The One," has preached a pseudo-spiritual message. "We are the ones we've been waiting for" he told a crowd of cheering followers at the beginning of May, that odd sentence having been interpreted as a reference to himself (the "royal we"?) and not the arrival of his followers' own epiphany and readiness for action. He has clearly and astutely insinuated himself and his message of change into the real spiritual void that characterizes much of modern life. In that regard, though shallow, he has tapped into something deeper than political or social dissatisfaction with current presidential leadership, potent as that dissatisfaction has been for many. What does change really mean in Obama's definition? We'll begin to get our answer soon, and more and more of it will be revealed as time goes by. I'm not confident of a happy answer.

### God's sovereignty allays fears

I'm now thinking about my post-election unease in light

of God's sovereign control of his creation. Just last night at supper Ed and I read Psalm 139 (it was our wedding text and is a Psalm we re-read together periodically). God tells us, through David, that he knows every thought we will think and every word we will say; he has ordained all our days and "written them in [his] book before one of them came to be."

There should be no doubt, not only based on that Word from Psalm 139 but from every book of his inscripturated Word, that God controls and has planned human history. That's why my misgivings about Mr. Obama's election have already dissipated. That is not to say that I'm suddenly unconcerned with where he might take us, given the chance, by his fellows in Congress of the same party. But if we take God at his Word then we must believe that he placed Barack Obama in the Presidential office come January 20, 2009. And for his peculiar reasons.

What I don't know (and neither does anybody else, regardless of the current euphoria) is whether God has chosen Barack Obama for blessing or judgment; or both. "[God] reveals the deep things of darkness and brings deep shadows into the light," Job asserts to his friends (12:22). That should be great comfort to light-lovers. Job then observes, "He makes nations great, and destroys them; he enlarges nations, and disperses them," (12:23). Daniel tells us something similar: "He changes times and seasons; he sets up kings and deposes them. He gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to the discerning" (Dan. 2:21). God also tells us that "the king's heart is in the hand of the LORD; he directs it like a watercourse wherever he pleases" (Prov. 21:1); and: "By me kings reign and rulers make laws that are just" (Prov. 8:15).

The fact that all that is true doesn't mean that our prayers are meaningless. How God's sovereignty and our own responsibility and actions meet is one of the great mysteries of our faith, yes, even of the universe. Yet God makes clear throughout Scripture that he listens to us when we call on him. Paul would not have urged us to pray ceaselessly (part of which is praise, of course) as an empty exercise in the face of a God who is going to ignore us anyway.

So regardless of our own political views, hopes and fears, we must pray for our leaders: pray that they will be endowed with the wisdom that precedes and ensures justice. Though Satan is always attempting to lead nations and their leaders astray, ultimately "all kings will bow down to [God] and all nations will serve him" (Ps. 72:11).

God also expects us to obey our leaders, even when they are, or become, tyrannical (a hard pill to swallow for citizens of a country founded through revolution). As we know, but sometimes don't like to hear, Paul tells us and first told the Roman church (which lived under a persecuting and oppressive government), "Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established." (Romans 13: 1). Then Paul immediately repeats, "The authorities that exist have been established by God" (13:1b). God uses both good and despotic leaders for his purposes (cf. his raising up of Cyrus ("my anointed") to afflict Israel and to "subdue the nations" (Isa. 45:1).

That's an immense comfort, two-edged sword though it can be. In the end, the real Good News is that "nations will come to [his] light, and kings to the brightness of [his] dawn" (Isa. 60:3).

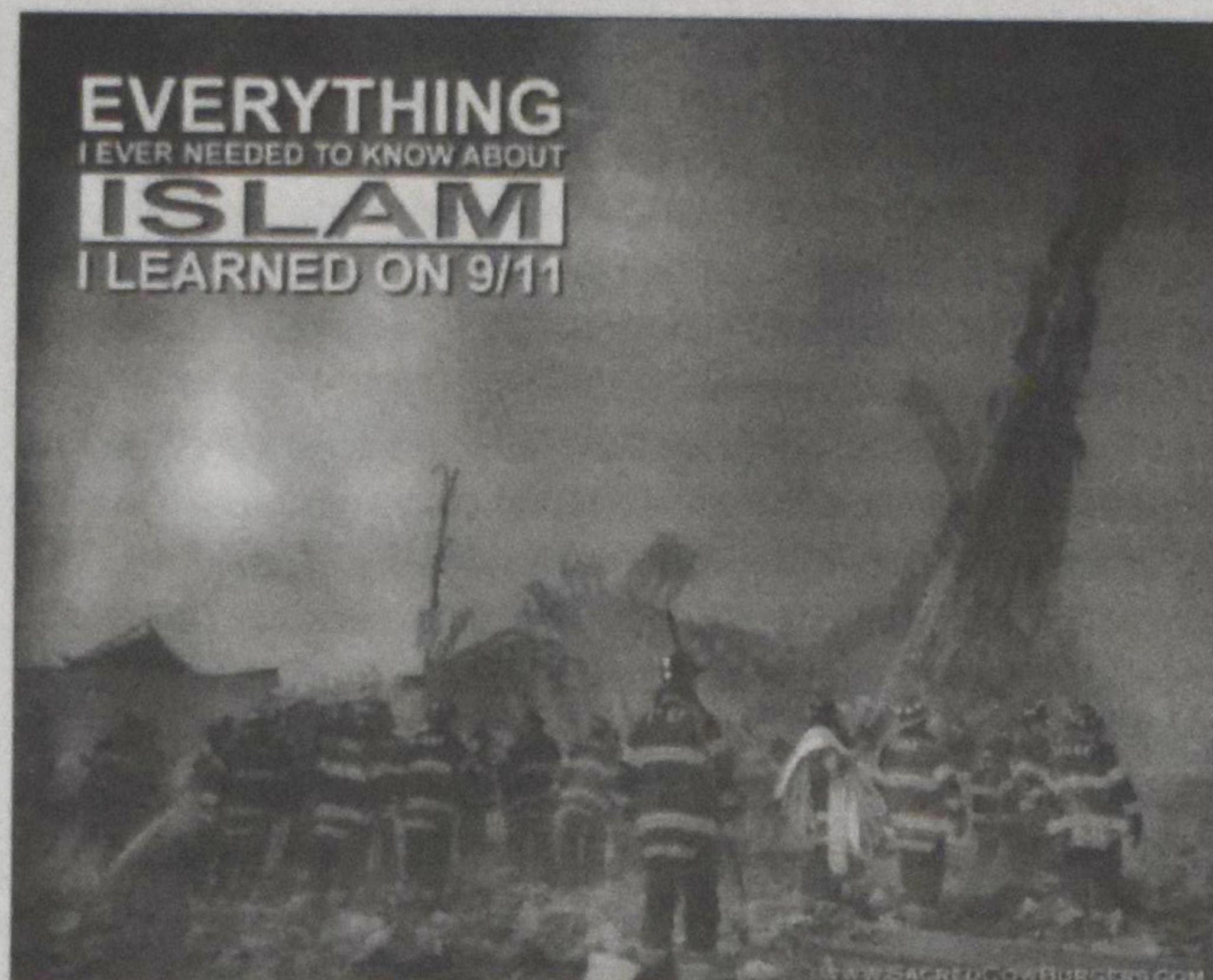
Marian Van Til worked for Christian Courier from 1984-2000, and preceded Harry der Nederlanden as its editor. She now lives in Youngstown, NY. She may be contacted by email at: [mvantil@roadrunner.com](mailto:mvantil@roadrunner.com) or via her website: [www.wordpowerpublishing.com](http://www.wordpowerpublishing.com)





## Perspective

## Weeding out a garden of misinformation



all Muslims want world domination. One of the five pillars of Islam is to *declare the faith*. That means approximately the same as our Great Commission, and, yet, we Christians don't want to dominate the world. We just want everyone to know the good news. But that's all Muslims, except for the radicals, want, too.

A Hollywood picture of a wild-eyed Turk screaming "Death to the infidels" is a third piece of misinformation. Indeed the Qur'an considers Jews and Christians

Coby Veenstra

1. "If you gave me 40 virgins in the afterlife, I might be willing to go on a suicide mission too." (Quote from a TV "comic")
2. "Those Muslims just want to control the world. If they don't admit it, they're lying." (Part of a rant by the driver of my carpool.)
3. "My son is in Paradise. He went to his death with the name of Allah on his lips." (Quote from the mother of one of the pilots that hit the twin towers.)

Ever since the events of 9/11, it has been an "in" thing to try to "understand Islam." That is a very good thing, since it is important to know and understand our neighbours. Unfortunately, some of the information going into that "understanding" is three parts misinformation and one part Hollywood. That leads to conclusions that are deeply offensive to devout Muslims, conclusions such as those in the first two quotes.

A second source of misinformation is that, within Islam, there are radicals with ideas that fly totally in the face of the teachings of the Qur'an. Parts of it are yanked out of context; in other parts, the meaning is totally skewed. This is not unlike some Christian radicals, especially those of the cults, and of movements in history such as the crusades with the battle cry "God wills it!" and the horrors committed by the church through the Inquisition. Those things are illustrated in the third quote.

### Misinformation that's "around"

The misinformation most offensive to devout Muslims is the idea that the reward in paradise will be 40 virgins for men's pleasure. The real picture of paradise, according to Muslims, is very physical: cool breezes, flowing waters, trees – the ideal world for desert dwellers. And, yes, part of that picture is the 40 virgins who will wait on the dwellers there. But these virgins are considered holy and untouchable. The media slur, which was picked up from misguided Muslims, that these virgins are there for physical pleasure is thoroughly offensive, even blasphemous to devout Muslims.

A second form of misinformation is that

"people of the Book" who are to be treated with respect. Muslims who don't do that are contradicting their own scripture (Sura 5:68-69). (Sura 109 also preaches freedom of religion.)

### Role of women

The subjugation of women is another idea that frustrates most Muslims. The role of women is a cultural thing very often enforced by misuse of the Qur'an, sort of like the Christian equivalent of misusing Ephesians 5. Nowhere in the Qur'an does it say anything other than that women are equal. Included in that is the concept of modesty. Just as in Christian circles, the definition among Muslims varies. I went to a Muslim wedding feast once and offered to cover my head. I was told lots of Muslim women don't do that as a matter of personal choice. Sure enough, about one third of the women present went without head covering, and two were in full veil. Each had their own choice. The Taliban are experts at making those things a religious issue, but that is most certainly not by their own scriptures. I see the Taliban as a latter-day Muslim "Inquisition" – same tactics, same loveless cruelty, and same fanaticism.

There are many more misconceptions "out there," but these are the most hurtful.

### Misinformation spread by radicals

The radicals claim that suicide bombers and the perpetrators of 9/11 were rewarded in heaven for their deeds. This is totally against the teaching of the Qur'an.

The Qur'an teaches that it is a heinous sin to:

- use fire as a weapon. That is only for God to use. Those who flew the planes fully loaded with jet fuel certainly committed that sin.
- fight unarmed men. Who in the twin towers had weapons?
- kill an innocent man. (That's as bad as destroying a whole city.)
- kill women and children.

The deeds of these men stand condemned by their own scriptures.

We acknowledge the gulf of faith that

## Forgiving ourselves – are we "jerks" or real people

Arlene Van Hove

"I wish I could have done things differently," says Helen, age 35 whose mother, age 62, just passed away.

"There were too many things left undone and unsaid," she explains.

"I thought we had plenty of time to fix our estrangement ... now she is gone and I am left with all the things I wished I had done differently.

Like Helen, how many of us don't have regrets about how we behaved either in the recent or long ago past. None of us gets away without having some regrets about what we have said or done because the reality is – none of us is perfect and all of us sometimes fall off the tracks.

Maybe we betrayed a spouse, a sibling or a friend. Maybe an unhappy event involving our child kept popping up when we struggled through young motherhood or fatherhood years ago. Maybe we fumbled our way through adolescence and did things (which our friends keep reminding us of) we are now embarrassed about. Maybe we had an addiction that caused harm to those we love. Or maybe, when we tally up our lives, we realize we have just too many mistakes and misjudgements under our belt to feel happy about who we are. Whatever it is that plays havoc with our sense of self ... is there ever a time to let ourselves off the hook?

### A difficult kind of forgiveness

An important tenet of our Christian faith is forgiveness. We are encouraged to forgive others as God has forgiven us. And so, forgiving those who have hurt us is seen as virtuous. But what about forgiving ourselves? I used to wonder whether forgiving ourselves was self-indulgent or a way to duck the blame. But I have come to the conclusion that forgiving others may, at times, be easier than forgiving ourselves.

An interesting study by psychologists at George Mason University in Virginia examined the traits of people who readily forgive themselves. The picture was startling. They found, as reported by Kim Pittaway, the following: "People with a dispositional tendency to forgive themselves appear to be rather self-centred, insensitive, narcissistic individuals who come up short in the moral emotional

## Getting Unstuck

Arlene Van Hove

domain, showing lower levels of shame, guilt and empathic responsiveness. Relatively 'shameless,' they feel little remorse for their transgressions, little empathy for their victims, and little concern about what others think of them." So how does one answer the question "What kind of people forgive themselves?" This study suggested one answer – "jerks, that's who!"

### Two kinds

These psychologists took a detailed look at the study and found they had captured two different kinds of self-forgiveness – true self-forgiveness and pseudo-self forgiveness.

So what is the main difference? Their conclusion explains why it is often easier to forgive others than to forgive ourselves. "True self-forgiveness requires that you go through a period of feeling crummy, experiencing guilt and regret, and engaging in a process of potentially uncomfortable self-examination. It involves acknowledging your wrongdoing and accepting responsibility for it. (You will need to say "sorry!") And finally, it means that you adjust your behaviour so that you don't make the same mistake again and, whenever possible, that you take steps to repair the harm you caused.

In pseudo-self forgiveness, you let yourself off the hook without any of that messy work in the middle: you bypass accepting responsibility (rationalizing or blaming the victim for what happened). You fail to acknowledge the harmful consequences of your actions (by minimizing them) and you skip the self-examination and reparation part. "Jerks," you see, forgive themselves easily because they rarely blame themselves to begin with. A toss of the head, a shrug of their shoulders ... and life goes on! For the rest of us the journey is tougher.

After reading the results of this interesting study, I could not help wondering if church pews were filled with "jerks" or actually "real people" who want to be transformed.

Arlene Van Hove is a therapist and a member of the Fleetwood CRC. She can be reached at [avanhove@shaw.ca](mailto:avanhove@shaw.ca)



separates Muslims and Christians, namely, that Jesus is the Messiah, "the Anointed," (which Muslims also recognize), but that he is also the Redeemer, (which Muslims don't believe). That is a huge gulf. However, let that be *all* that separates us, not a gulf made bigger and deeper by misinformation from

either side. Only then can we communicate properly and minister effectively.

Coby Veenstra ([cobyveenstra@hotmail.com](mailto:cobyveenstra@hotmail.com)) is a retired teacher who lives in St. Catharines, Ontario.



## Morality

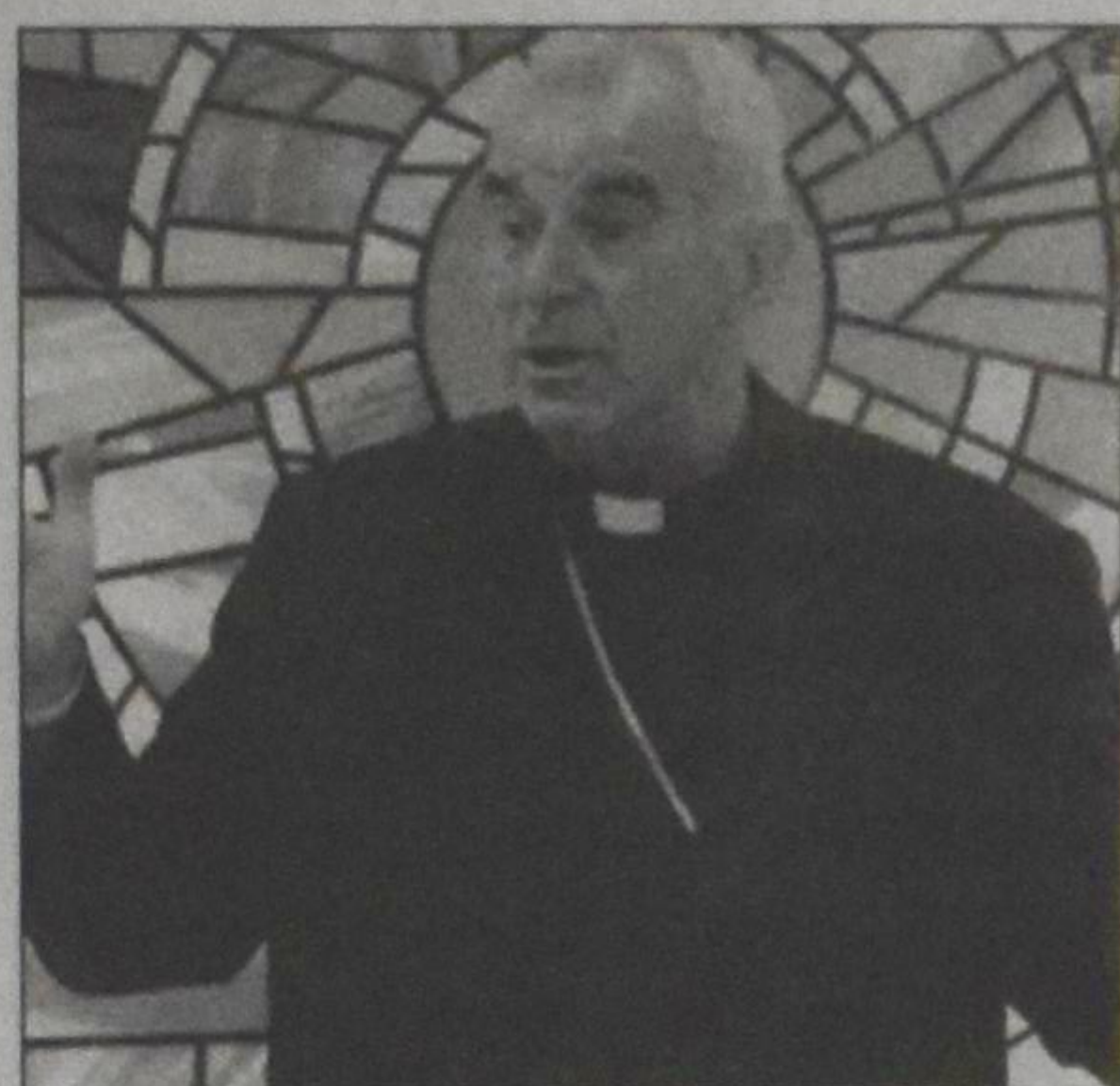
# UK government behaving like Nazis: Edinburgh cardinal...

**Hilary White**

EDINBURGH – The UK government's Human Fertilization and Embryology (HFE) bill contains "grotesque," "horrificing" and "nightmarish" provisions that are reminiscent of the Nazi eugenics policies, says the cardinal archbishop of Edinburgh.

Following his speech last weekend at a pro-life conference in Glasgow, Keith Cardinal O'Brien has issued a scathing open letter telling MPs who voted for the bill that they are acting against the ethical developments of the last 50 years of human rights laws.

Schedule 3 of the bill "enshrines the concept of 'presumed consent' in UK law," the cardinal observed, meaning that the bill would allow the removal of tissue from mentally incapacitated adults or children, without their specific consent. This tissue would then be used to create cloned animal-human hybrid or other embryos. This provision was ensured by an amendment, agreed



upon by an all-party committee of only 17 MPs after the main parliamentary debates.

"I am appalled that you are promoting a Bill which seeks, by stealth, to create a regime where extracting tissue and cells from human beings no longer requires their consent or involvement," Cardinal O'Brien wrote.

The cardinal's reference to the Nazis derives from the aims of the eugenics programs that foreshadowed the Holocaust. Under the pre-war Nazi eugenics programs, and later during the war, incapacitated

and mentally ill patients as well as those interned in concentration camps, were used as experimental test subjects without their consent. In response to these atrocities, the post-war Nuremberg Code was adopted by all Western countries to ensure that consent was the first consideration made when using human beings as test subjects in medical and scientific research.

### Against declarations

"The proposals in this Bill," the cardinal said, "represent a breach of 50 years of ethical medical research."

"They by-pass the Declaration of Helsinki, the Human Tissue Act, the Mental Capacity Act and the Human Rights Act. Removing parts of people's bodies without their consent utterly flies in the face of all BMA and GMC guidance on consent to research."

Referring to the post-war revelations of Nazi medical atrocities, the Cardinal said, "The hideous

savagery of their experiments convinced the civilized world that such practices must be outlawed forever.

Among the bill's provisions is also one that allows the reclamation of ova from aborted female babies. Children created from these recovered ova would be the offspring of people killed before they were born. The cardinal said, "The grotesque implications of these procedures are utterly horrifying."

The cardinal pointed to the public consultation on such practices

conducted by the Human Fertilization and Embryology Authority that surveyed 9,000 respondents, 83.2 per cent of whom opposed the practice involving aborted female babies, "and even the few in favor underlined the necessity of consent."

"I am staggered that you would endorse legislation, which describes the creation of embryos from a person without their consent as 'non-invasive' and which enshrines the concept of 'presumed consent' in UK law."

(LifeSiteNews.com)

## Freedom of religion assaulted ... continued from p. 15

To bolster this position, she makes much of the fact that this letter was written while there was no ongoing public debate about this topic in Red Deer. Presumably, her decision might have been different if the letter had been written during such ongoing public debate in that community. On such flimsy, contrived grounds Boisson's letter was declared to be in violation of the law.

But it gets worse, which is evident in the remedies she subsequently prescribed.

She writes that the intent is not to punish Boisson but that "remedies should have symbolic and educational value" and should serve "to ameliorate the effects of discrimination insofar as is possible and to denunciate the actions which were the subject of the complaint..."

Though there is no direct victim who has demanded redress, the complainant, Darren Lund, "has suffered ridicule and harassment as a result of his complaint," Boisson is ordered to pay him \$5000. He is also ordered to pay Janell Dodd for expenses in connection with her testimony, up to a maximum of \$2000.

Further, Boisson is ordered to cease publishing in newspapers, by email, on the radio, in public

speeches, or on the Internet, in future, disparaging remarks about homosexuals or about Lund and his witnesses. And all disparaging remarks about homosexuals must be removed from Boisson's current websites and publications. He is also restrained from ever committing similar contraventions of the Act.

He must provide Lund with a written apology for his letter, and request the *Red Deer Advocate* to publish this apology as well as the text of the panel chair's "Decision on Remedy."

### A question of freedom

No one should think that this case is of no concern to the rest of us. One may disagree with the style or substance of Boisson's letter. But there should be no confusion about what is really at stake here. This is a brazen attempt to fundamentally alter the nature and purpose of law in a direction where those with a narrow agenda want to muzzle those who disagree, especially Christians.

The real issue here is whether Canada will remain a free, democratic and a law-based country, or one where only one, radically secular ideology, will dictate behaviour. Think of it. Here is someone who assumes

the authority to order a newspaper what to print and what not to print. This official also compels a free citizen to apologize publicly for his opinions and forbids him ever to say anything critical ("disparaging") about the person who brought the complaint and about all homosexuals.

No self-respecting person is able to comply with such orders, and Boisson has stated he will not do so. This might put him in a position where he is held in contempt of court, which is a serious, punishable offence. So it could be that in this supposedly freest province of Canada, its own government supports this kind of tyranny, one of its citizens might find himself in jail for the crime of speaking his mind.

In the meantime, Boisson has appealed this human rights decision to the Court of Queen's Bench of Alberta. Every freedom-respecting citizen should be prepared to support, morally and financially, this appeal.

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is the past director of the Work  
Research Foundation who lives in  
Willowdale, Ontario.



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## Birthday

*90th Birthday Open House*

The children of **Maaiké Dykstra-Dehaan** would like to extend an invitation to you for the celebration of their mother's **90th birthday** on Saturday, November 22 at 1-4 p.m. at Central Gospel Church, 240 Scott Street, St. Catharines. *Best Wishes Only.*

From the families of: Chuck & Corrie; Fran & Mike; Al & Weya; Marty & MaryAnn; Teresa; Shirley & Brian; Ray & Joanne; Frank & Gail; George & Donna; Bob & Lorraine; Greta & Brian; Wendy; Jane & Gerard; Veronica & Garry; Ed & Wendy.  
She has 29 grandchildren & 49 great-grandchildren.  
Psalm 100:5

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## Obituary

At the Woodstock General Hospital on Friday November 7, 2008.

**GEERT "GEORGE" VANDERVECHT**

of Woodstock in his 82nd year.

Beloved husband of Tine "Tina" (nee Harlaar) VanderVecht for over 57 years.

Dear father of Pete of Woodstock, Homer (Bo) of London, Annette Zeyl of Dorchester, Diane Fluit (Rudy) of Windsor, Wilfred (Nicki) of Ingersoll, Margaret Ball (Richard) of Embro, Gary and Joe all of Woodstock. Loved Opa of twenty-five grandchildren and seven great-grandchildren and he is also survived by his twin sister Dini of Florida. Predeceased by son-in-law John and grandson Jonathan.

George was a long time member of the Covenant Christian Reformed Church. A celebration of George's life took place at the Covenant Christian Reformed Church, 410 Lansdowne Ave, Woodstock on Wednesday at 1:30 p.m. with Rev. Robert Loerts officiating. A private grave side service was held at Oxford Memorial Park Cemetery. Contributions to the John Knox Christian School or Homestead Christian Care would be appreciated.

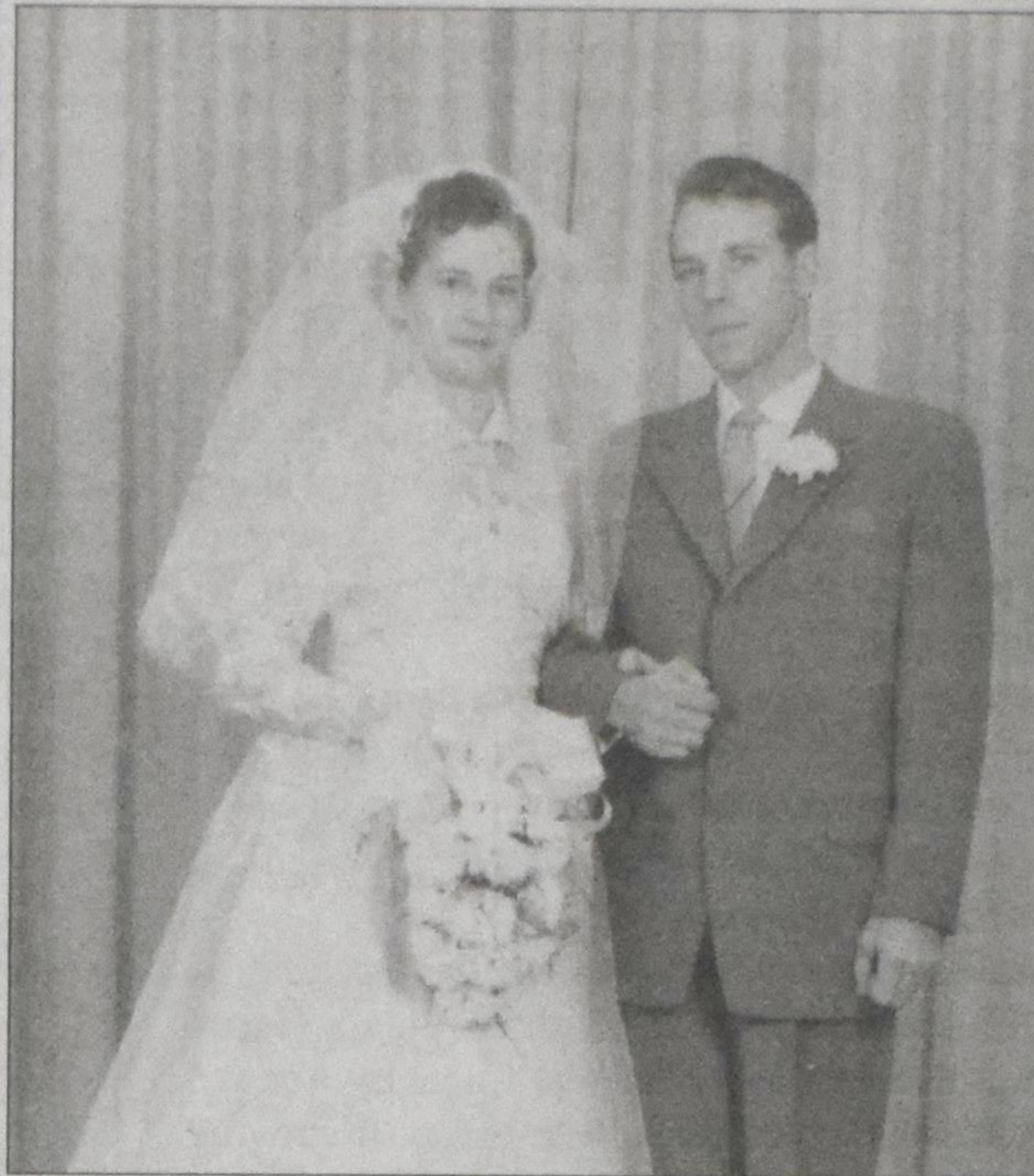
Online condolences at [www.longworthfuneralhome.com](http://www.longworthfuneralhome.com)

## Anniversary

1958

December 5

2008



Address: Lynfield Farm Box 94, Forrest MB R0K 0W0



Happy Anniversary

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Dad & Mum

Opa & Oma

Love from your family:

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1960-71

Henry Cornell

1962-62

Janet & Peter

Alynne

Cornell & Shaunna

Jonathan, Samaira

Eric & Julie

Rebecca, Cornell

Darren & Gaylen

William

Katherine, Heather, Anneke

Charles & Susan

## Personal

36 year-old single Christian woman from the greater Toronto area would like to correspond/meet a single Christian man.

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c/o Christian Courier  
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## Concerts

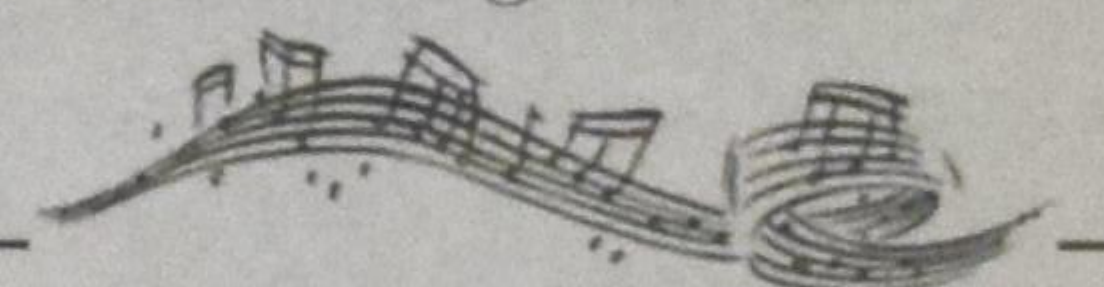
**Springdale CRC**

Saturday November 22, 2008,  
7:30 p.m.

**Festive Concert, OCMA** Come back. Choir - Organ - Panflute - Trumpet - Vocal Quartet & Audience.

Admission Adults: \$20.00  
under 12: \$10.00

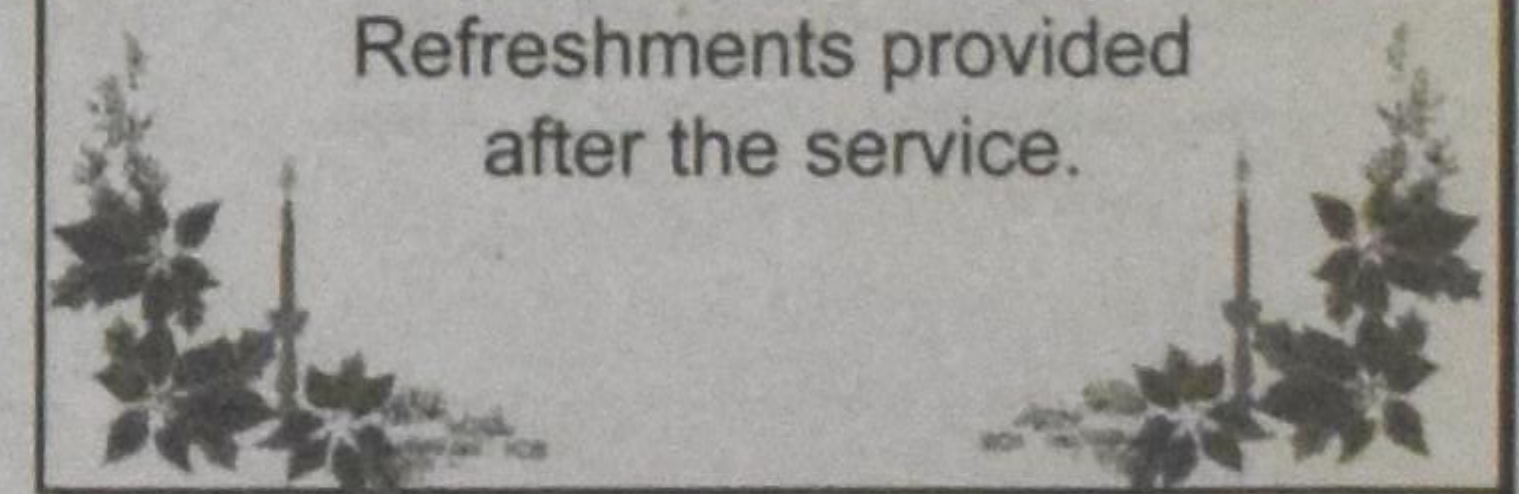
Springdale Christian Reformed Church,  
1466 5th Sideroad **Bradford**  
Phone OCMA @ 416 636-9779

**Dutch Christmas Carol Service**

at Emmanuel Reformed Church  
170 Clarke St. **Woodstock**  
December 7 at 7:00 p.m.

Rev. Henry DeBolster giving the message.

Choir singing. Babysitting provided.  
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From 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. or call for an appointment to view at your convenience.

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Sue Bork - Royal LePage Landco Realty Brokerage 519-205-2675  
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## Classifieds / Job Opportunities

### The Leadership Exchange –

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#### Director

The Director will be responsible to the Executive Director of the Christian Reformed Church in North America to implement the vision and mission of the Leadership Exchange. This will include the administration of the organization and implementation of its activities.

Qualified candidates must have a committed faith in Christ and evidence of an understanding of, and commitment to, the Reformed theological tradition. They must give evidence of a history of successful leadership in an organization, knowledge of the integration of leadership theory and Biblical perspectives, and demonstrate ability to creatively teach leadership and engage others in a process of interactive learning. A Masters degree required and additional education is desirable.

Visit our website at [www.crcna.org](http://www.crcna.org) for complete job description and to apply.

Application deadline is January 31, 2009.

*Do you have a heart for pastoral care?*  
**Community Christian Reformed Church** in Kitchener, Ontario  
is looking for a

#### Pastor / Director of Pastoral Care

for its almost 1000 members. We are looking for a person mature in the Reformed Christian faith with experience in leading and training others in developing proactive activities, and also visiting members or those new to the church, those who are going through difficult situations, illnesses, mourning or loneliness.

This individual must be a self-starter, but yet be able to work within an existing strong team setting. The applicant needs to be a person who is ordained within the CRC (or be able to be ordained) with the ability to relate to a wide variety of people aged 20 and older. Our greatest emphasis is on developing pastoral care skills in the pastoral elders, deacons and all the members of the church, by example and by training.

To obtain a copy of the church profile, the position mandate and further information, please contact our search committee c/o:

Peter Herfst at [mpherfst@rogers.com](mailto:mpherfst@rogers.com).

Or write him at P. Herfst 42 Wilkins Drive Kitchener ON N2E 1L2

Application deadline will be January 31, 2009. It is our hope to fill this position by summer, 2009.

### Classis Alberta North

is seeking an ordained, **experienced pastor** to fill a

#### half-time Classical Regional Consultant position.

The position focuses on fostering healthy churches and healthy pastor/church relationships through things like providing education to pastors and church leaders and managing and mediating actual instances of conflict.

Compensation is in line with a church ministry position.

More details can be found at [classisalbertanorth.org](http://classisalbertanorth.org) under "Documents" "Classis Fall 2008" p. 24-26.

Questions? Contact Pastor Mike Vandyk ([pastor6@telus.net](mailto:pastor6@telus.net)) or call (403) 782-5050.

Application deadline January 31, 2009.

**Hope CRC of Brantford, Ontario** is seeking a

#### full-time ordained

#### "Associate Pastor with Focus on the Youth"

We are a healthy growing congregation of some 140 families that seeks to nurture our youth for Kingdom service.

Position responsibilities include teaching, visiting, participation in worship and some preaching.

Job description and church profile are available by contacting

Elaine van Wyngaarden (search Committee chair)  
at 519-756-8524 (email: [dealk@rogers.com](mailto:dealk@rogers.com))  
or Pastor Ken Benjamins at 519-759-7581  
(email [pastorken@silomail.com](mailto:pastorken@silomail.com))

Recently advertised job opportunities as well as issue dates and deadlines can be found on our website.  
[christiancourier.ca](http://christiancourier.ca)



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**English** – teach journalism, and courses in business and technical writing, college composition, developmental writing, screenwriting, or poetry

**Education** – teach selected education courses at the undergraduate and/or graduate level

**Engineering** – teach electrical, mechanical, structural, and/or general engineering courses

**History** – teach course offerings in history department. Candidates with other flexible teaching capabilities (sociology, philosophy, and/or political studies) are particularly encouraged to apply

**Sociology/Criminal Justice** – teach undergraduate courses, both introductory, advanced, and special topics

To learn more about a position and receive application materials, qualified persons committed to a Reformed, biblical perspective and educational philosophy are encouraged to e-mail a letter of interest and curriculum vita/resume to:

Dr. Erik Hoekstra, Provost

Facsimile: 712 722-6035

Dordt College

E-mail: [provost@dordt.edu](mailto:provost@dordt.edu)

498 4th Ave. NE

Sioux Center IA 51250-1697

Web site: [www.dordt.edu/offices/academic\\_affairs](http://www.dordt.edu/offices/academic_affairs)

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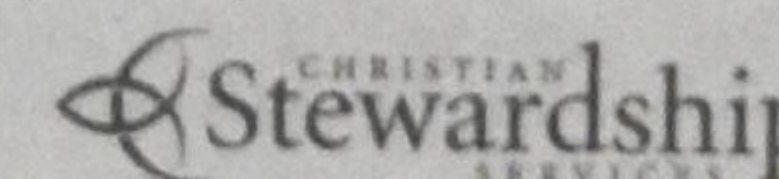
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## Classifieds



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 Osoyoos - CJOR ..... 8:00 am ..... 1490  
 Prince George - CIRX ..... 7:00 am ..... 94.3  
 Princeton - CHOR ..... 8:00 am ..... 1400  
 Smithers - CFBV ..... 9:15 am ..... 1230  
 Vernon - CJIB ..... 9:30 pm ..... 94

## ALBERTA

Brooks - CIBQ ..... 8:30 am ..... 1340  
 Edmonton - CJCA ..... 6:00 pm ..... 930

## MANITOBA

Winnipeg - CKJS ..... 9:00 am ..... 810

## ONTARIO

Atikokan - CFAK ..... 9:30 am ..... 1240  
 Chatham - CFCO ..... 6:30 am ..... 630  
 Hamilton - CHAM ..... 7:30 am ..... 820  
 London - CKSL ..... 7:00 am ..... 1410  
 Owen Sound - CFOS ..... 7:00 am ..... 560  
 Sarnia - CHOK ..... 7:30 am ..... 1070  
 Stratford - CJCS ..... 8:45 am ..... 1240  
 Wingham - CKNX ..... 10:30 am ..... 920  
 Woodstock - CJFH ..... 7:30 am ..... 94.03

## NEW BRUNSWICK

Saint John - CHSJ ..... 9:00 am ..... 94.1

## PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND

Charlottetown - CFCY ..... 7:00 am ..... 630

## NOVA SCOTIA

Digby - CKDY ..... 6:00 am ..... 1420  
 Halifax - CFDR ..... 8:30 am ..... 780  
 Liverpool - CKBW ..... 7:30 am ..... 94.5  
 Kentville - CKEN ..... 8:30 am ..... 1490  
 Middleton - CKAD ..... 8:30 am ..... 1350

Shelburne - CKBW ..... 7:30 am ..... 93.1  
 Sydney - CJCB ..... 7:00 am ..... 1270  
 Weymouth - CKDY ..... 8:30 am ..... 103.1  
 Windsor - CFAB ..... 8:30 am ..... 1450

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 High River/Calgary CHRB 1140 AM.....Sun. 4:30pm  
 Nordegg CHBW 93.9 FM.....Sun. 8:30 am  
 Rocky Mtn.House CHBW 94.5 FM. Sun. 8:30 am

## BRITISH COLUMBIA

Prince Rupert CIAJ 100.7 FM ..... Sat. 10 am

## MANITOBA

Steinbach CHSM 1250 AM ..... Sun. 4 pm

## NOVA SCOTIA

Bridgewater CKBW 1000 AM ..... Sun. 5:30 am

## ONTARIO

Oshawa CKDO 1350 AM ..... Sat. 8 am  
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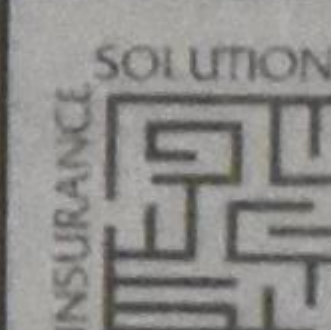
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## Events/Advertising

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS - 2008

- Nov 21** Organ Concert, Jonathan Oldengarm, organist, at 7:30 PM. Hebron Christian Reformed Church, 4240 Anderson Street, **Whitby**, ON. Tickets are \$10.00 at the door. For more information call: 905-668-0040
- Nov 22** Festive Concert, OCMA Come back. Choir 7:30 p.m. – Organ – Panflute – Trumpet – Vocal Quartet & Audience. Admission Adults: \$20.00 under 12: \$10.00. Springdale CRC, 1466 5th Sideroad, **Bradford** ON Phone OCMA at 416-636-9779
- Nov 23** Dutch Service will be held in the **Ancaster** Christian Reformed Church at 3:00 p.m. Rev. Harry VanderWindt will be preaching.
- Dec 7** Dutch Christmas Carol service at Emmanuel Reformed Church, 170 Clarke St. **Woodstock** at 7:00 p.m. Rev. Henry DeBolster giving the message, Choir singing Babysitting available, Refreshments provided after the service.
- Dec 7** St. Lukes Annual Christmas Concert 3:00 p.m. We will feature 25 members of the Liberation Choir in this annual event at St. Lukes Anglican Church, 1382 Ontario St, **Burlington**, ON.
- Dec 13** The Liberation Choir will lead the 5th Annual Christmas Sing-a-long Concert, 7 p.m. at Rehoboth Christian Reformed Church in Bowmanville, 130 Scugog Rd, **Bowmanville**, ON
- Dec 17** The Ambassadors Christian Male Chorus and The Ladies Advent Singers will render a concert of praise to Christ the King at 8:00 p.m. in Mt. **Hamilton** Christian Reformed Church. 1411 Upper Wellington Street. Freewill offering.
- Dec 19** The Ambassadors and Ladies Advent Singers are guests at The Holland Christian Homes annual participating Christmas concert at 7:30 p.m. Offering for HCH's broadcast ministries.
- Dec 20** The Liberation Choir 5th Annual Christmas Sing-a-long Concert with the Steeltown Orchestra. at 7 p.m. at St. Giles United Church, Main St E & 85 Holton Ave S, **Hamilton**.
- Dec 21** Liberation Choir Georgetown/Salvation Army Christmas fundraiser Charity Concert 7 p.m. Georgetown Christian Reformed Church 1161 Trafalgar Road, **Georgetown**, ON

## Elim Investment Opportunities

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This is not to be construed as an offer to solicit investments and no investment can be made until the investor has received an Information Statement issued by Elim Housing Society.

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*A Christian Retirement Community*



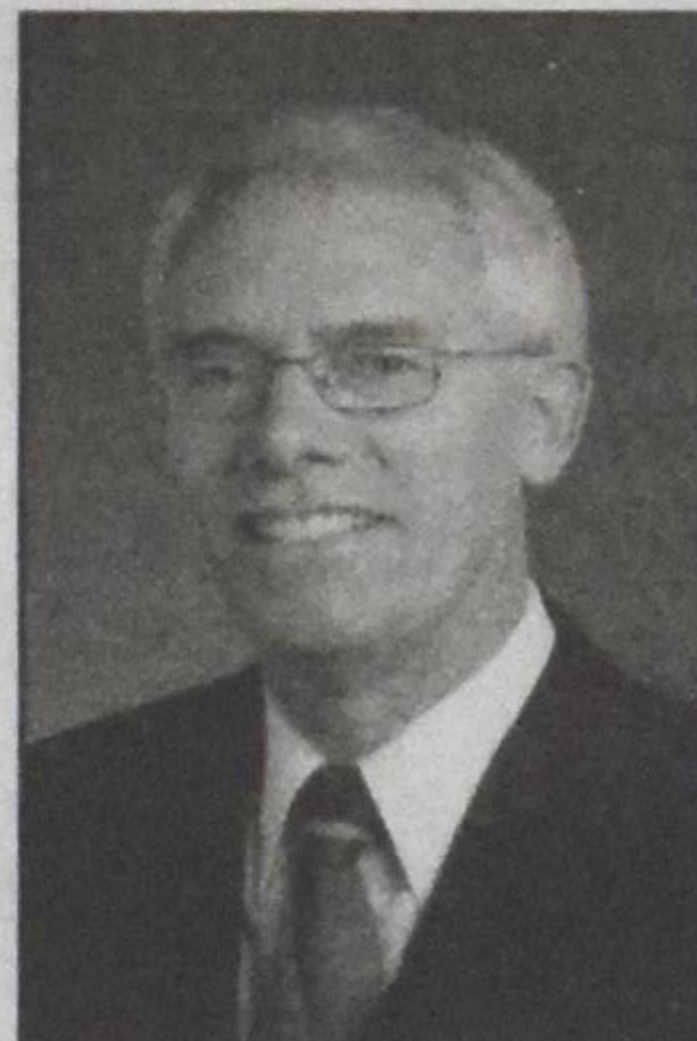
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For information about the Spring 2009 China Tour with a Purpose, call Corrie Mulder at 1-888-588-3388 or email [mulderc@crcna.org](mailto:mulderc@crcna.org).

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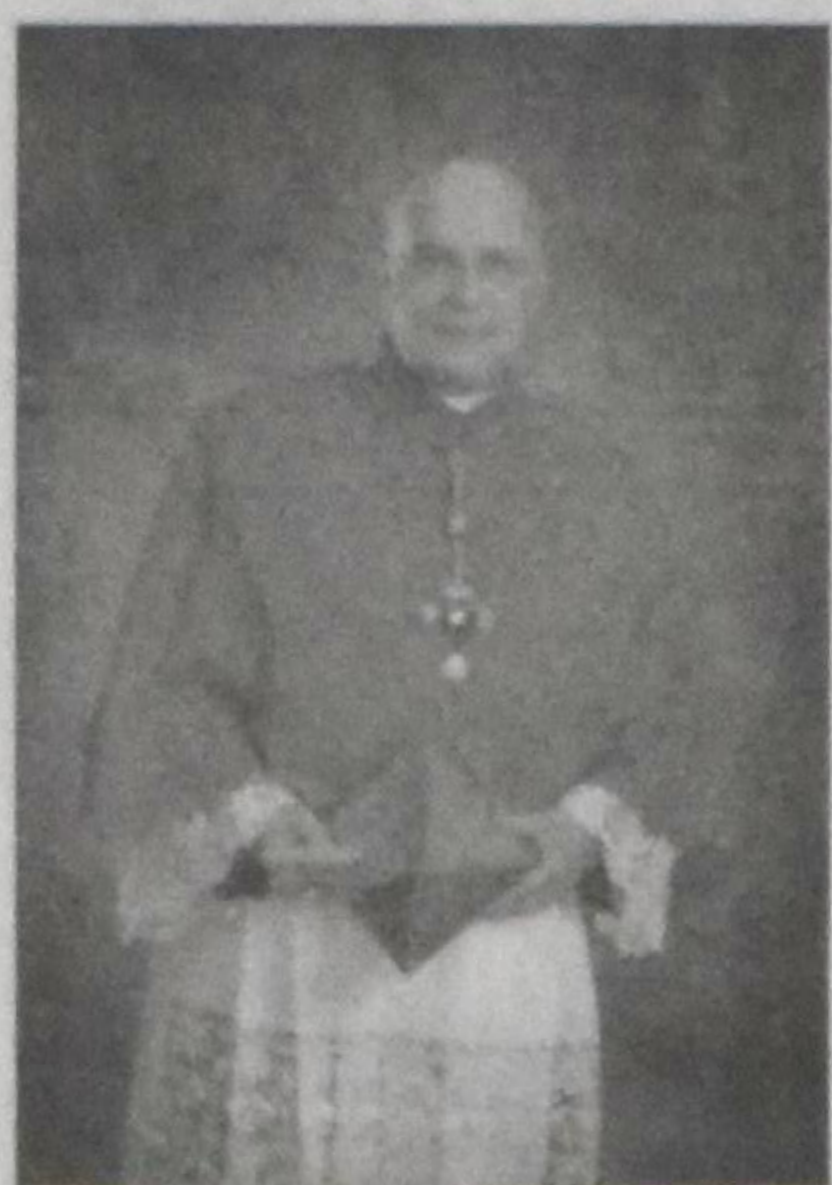
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## News

# Catholic bishops warn Obama against expanded abortion rights



Cardinal Francis George, archbishop of Chicago, is one of 11 American cardinals who will have a vote to elect the next pope.

**Daniel Burke**  
BALTIMORE

The leading U.S. Catholic prelate warned Wednesday (Nov. 12) that President-elect Barack Obama's promise to unify the country would be shattered if he pursues policies to increase access to abortion. "If the election is misinterpreted ideologically as

a referendum on abortion," said Cardinal Francis George of Chicago, president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, "the unity desired by President-elect Obama and all Americans at this moment of crisis would be impossible to achieve."

"Aggressively pro-abortion policies, legislation and executive orders will permanently alienate tens of millions of Americans, and would be seen by many as an attack on the free exercise of their religion," George said.

George's statement was unanimously approved by nearly 300 bishops in a closed-door session at the end of the bishops' semi-annual meeting here, according to church officials. After an election in which 54 percent of Catholic voters backed Obama, who supports abortion rights, over the strenuous objection of some church leaders, the Catholic prelates gathered here were eager to reassert themselves as teachers of the faith.

## Seek meeting

"The intention is to clarify the commitment of the bishops to participate in the public life of the country," George said in an interview Tuesday. The cardinal added that Catholic officials may meet soon with leaders of the incoming Obama administration.

Archbishop Charles Chaput of Denver, an outspoken anti-abortion advocate among the bishops, said the statement was also directed at the nation's 67 million Catholics. "It's a message to the people of the church that we're not going to give up on the abortion fight until abortion is no longer accepted as part of our culture," Chaput said in an interview.

George said the bishops look forward to working with Obama on reforming immigration laws, promoting peace, and improving access to health care and quality education. But throughout the week, the bishops expressed alarm at hints that the president-elect will loosen federal spending restrictions on embryonic stem cell research, which the church considers tantamount to abortion, as well as Obama's campaign

promise to support the Freedom of Choice Act.

That legislation, introduced in 2007, would remove all federal and state restrictions on abortion and codify Roe v. Wade, the 1973 Supreme Court decision that legalized abortion. However, it never left House and Senate committees and would need to be introduced again when the new Congress convenes in January.

## Dangerous law

Still, George devoted a sizable portion of his two-page statement to denouncing the legislation, known as FOCA, saying that it would "coerce" Americans into subsidizing abortion with their tax dollars, outlaw parental notification laws and "have lethal consequences for prenatal human life." The law would also threaten the Catholic health care system, which George said Tuesday comprises about a third of all U.S. hospitals, and force doctors to perform abortions against their will, according to the cardinal.

"The danger the bishops see at this moment is that a bad court decision will be enshrined in bad legislation that is more radical than the 1973 Supreme Court decision itself," George said.

Throughout the week, the Catholic prelates debated the proper approach to take with the incoming Obama administration, as President Bush, who was seen as a church ally on the "life issues," prepares to leave the White House. A vocal minority of bishops stood in public sessions to urge for a strident, uncompromising approach to laws and politicians — especially Catholics — who support legalized abortion.

## Prepared to die

"I think any bishop here would consider it a privilege to die tomorrow to bring about the end of abortion," Bishop Robert Hermann, interim leader of the Archdiocese of St. Louis, said during a floor debate on Tuesday. "We should be willing to spend the end of our lives dedicated to ... bring(ing) about the end to this genocide."

Bishop Joseph Martino of Scranton, Pa., the hometown of Vice President-elect Joe Biden, sought support for enforcing church penalties on Catholic politicians who, like Biden, support some abortion rights. But George's statement does not address that matter, and a quiet majority of bishops advocate for a softer approach. "As someone who has spent most of my life in diplomacy, I would say we have to make clear what we believe, but work with those who don't share our views in a persuasive manner," said Archbishop Timothy Broglio, a former Vatican ambassador who now heads the Archdiocese for the Military Services, USA.

Bishop Donald Trautman of Erie, Pa., said George's statement generally captures both camps of bishops. "It sends the right tone to the incoming administration that they have our prayers and support but at the same time we, as bishops, have an abiding commitment to defending life."

## Local food is not always the best choice

**John Clement**

The idea of local food has taken off like a rocket and has wide appeal. Viewed from an Ontario perspective, it seems to make sense that one of the best ways to boost our regional economies is to grow the crops and provide the products required by the province's ever-increasing and diverse population. And it also seems a good way of reducing our much-touted carbon footprint.

But British author Fred Pearce challenges the idea that local food is always the best choice from both an ecological and humanist perspective. In fact, he says that sometimes the best choice is food that is flown into our modern economies from developing nations.

## Important distinctions

Pearce developed his perspective after researching his latest book called *Confessions of an Eco Sinner*. In the book, the author hunts down the source of the

multiple things he purchases to discover the stories of how and where they're produced. In the process, he made discoveries that gave him a nuanced view on the idea of global trade.

One example is a Kenyan bean farmer by the name of Jacob. The farm in question is only two acres but because Jacob now has access to markets in the United Kingdom he makes about \$300 per month or about six times what he previously made before the UK access. Now, Jacob is able to send his children to school, has a concrete floor in his home and is able to buy better clothing for his wife. Pearce points out that Jacob's carbon footprint is only 1/30th of that of a European and now asks rhetorically, "Do we really want to put Jacob out of a job in order to reduce global warming?"

Pearce also discovered that the developing world has less desirable stories. He travelled to a shrimp plantation in Bangladesh and discovered that the farmer at the bottom of a long production chain was only making about one dollar a day. However, about seven sets of middlemen or "rent seekers" took possession of the shrimp after the farmer and squeezed out most of the profit. Pearce said they amount to little more than "shrimp mafia."

## Not an easy question

His travels and investigations have impacted Pearce in such a



way that he now buys more Kenyan beans and no Bangladesh shrimp. He says he isn't against the development of local food economies in the Western world but says he's not in favor of "pulling up the drawbridge" and abdicating responsibilities to people in the developing world. In fact, he says that in the right situations, trade is a better alternative than aid.

Canadian farm groups have generally favored a balanced approach to agricultural trade. But stories like those told by Pearce show how difficult it can be to determine where the balance should rest between home-grown foods and trade-based aid. If we could pull a rabbit out of a magic hat, the answer would be to create a balance that works for the prosperity of farmers in both the developed and developing worlds. It just seems that magic hats are very hard to find.

John Clement is the General Manager of the Christian Farmers Federation of Ontario. ([www.christianfarmers.org](http://www.christianfarmers.org))



Kenyan bean farmer Jacob Musyoki